





**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Title:	Housing Management Consultative Committee
Date:	24 March 2009
Time:	3.00pm
Venue:	Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall
Members:	Councillors: Caulfield (Chairman), Allen, Davey, Fryer, Mears, Pidgeon, Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson), Simson and Wells
Contact:	Martin Warren Senior Democratic Services Officer 01273 291058 martin.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Tenant Representatives:

Chris El-Shabba, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

Stewart Gover, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Ted Harman, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

Heather Hayes, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Chris Kift, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Beryl Snelling, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Beverley Weaver, West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel

Muriel Briault, Leaseholder Action Group

Tom Whiting, Sheltered Housing Action Group

Colin Carden, Older People's Council

Sue Hansen, Tenant Disability Network

John Melson, High Rise Action Group

AGENDA

61. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

- (a) Declaration of Substitutes - Where Councillors are unable to attend a meeting, a substitute Member from the same Political Group may attend, speak and vote in their place for that meeting.
- (b) Declarations of Interest by all Members present of any personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- (c) Exclusion of Press and Public - To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

NOTE: Any item appearing in Part 2 of the Agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.

A list and description of the exempt categories is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.

62. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2009 (copy attached)

63. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

64. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

- (a) Items reserved by the Cabinet Member
- (b) Items reserved by the Opposition Spokesperson
- (c) Items reserved by Members, with the agreement of the Cabinet Member.

NOTE: Public Questions, Written Questions from Councillors, Petitions, Deputations, Letters from Councillors and Notices of Motion will be reserved automatically.

65. PETITIONS

No petitions have been received by the date of publication of the agenda

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

66. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(The closing date for receipt of public questions is 12 noon on 17 March 2009)

No public questions have been received by the date of publication

67. DEPUTATIONS

(The closing date for receipt of deputations is 12 noon on 17 March 2009)

No deputations have been received as of the date of publication.

68. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

(The closing date for letters from Councillors was 10.00am on 12 March 2009)

69. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

(The closing date for written questions from Councillors was 10.00am on 12 March 2009)

70. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

No Notices of Motion have been received.

71. ALLOCATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY REVIEW

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Report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached)

Contact Officer: Sylvia Peckham Tel: 293318

Ward Affected: All Wards

72. HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

39 - 66

Report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached)

Contact Officer: John Austin-Locke Tel: 29-1008

Ward Affected: All Wards

73. SHELTERED HOUSING FOCUS GROUP UPDATE

67 - 72

Report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached)

Contact Officer: Martin Reid Tel: 29-3321

Ward Affected: All Wards

74. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - UPDATED 2009/10 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

73 - 82

Report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached)

Contact Officer: David Gray Tel: 29

Ward Affected: All Wards

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The City Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public. Provision is also made on the agendas for public questions to committees and details of how questions can be raised can be found on the website and/or on agendas for the meetings.

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For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Martin Warren, (01273 291058, email martin.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Date of Publication - Monday, 16 March 2009

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

3.00pm 20 JANUARY 2009

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Caulfield (Chairman); Allen, Davey, Fryer, Mears, Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson), Simson, Wells and Barnett

Tenant Representatives: Chris El-Shabba (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Ted Harman (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Heather Hayes (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), Beryl Snelling (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Tom Whiting (Sheltered Housing Action Group), Sue Hansen (Tenant Disability Network) and Beverley Weaver (Foredown Estate Residents' Association)

PART ONE

48. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

48.1 Declarations of Substitutes

48a.1 Councillor Barnett for Councillor Pidgeon.
Jean Davis for Chris Kift (Central Area Panel)

48b Declarations of Interest

48b.1 There were none.

48c. Exclusion of Press and Public

48c.1 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in section 100I (1) of the said Act.

48.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

49. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 49.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2008 be approved and signed by the Cabinet Member.

50. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 50.1 The Chairman reported that, from May 2009 the Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC) would meet on Mondays rather than Tuesdays.
- 50.2 The Chairman noted that a suggestion had been made by Tom Whiting that Tenant Representatives hold a 'pre-meeting' prior to the HMCC in order to prepare. The Chairman supported the idea and noted that should Tenant Representatives wish to organise this themselves she would endeavour to offer relevant support.
- 50.3 The Chairman reported that, following the Tenant-led meeting about Communal Heating various actions had taken place; 1627 properties had been surveyed and all communal heating systems had been examined. Where practical and necessary, minor repairs had been carried out. A meeting was planned for late January with contractors to establish an Action Plan to resolve outstanding issues.
- 50.4 The communal heating system at St. James' House had been surveyed, though the Chairman noted that residents had not felt involved in the process.
- 50.5 The Chairman noted that John Melson and Tina Urquhart had stepped down from the HMCC and thanked them for their dedication and support.
- 50.6 The Chairman noted that (previous HMCC Rep) Ted Kitchen had been unwell and wished him a speedy recovery. She also noted that Stewart Gover was in hospital and wished him well.
- 50.7 The Chairman reported that information about the Local Delivery Vehicle would be provided to the Area Panels in February. The Chairman offered Members and Representatives the opportunity to be briefed in the interim by Officers should they request.
- 50.8 The Chairman recognised the amount of work that Officers, Members and Tenant Representatives undertook and the frustrations that occasionally arose. She asked that the atmosphere of mutual respect engendered over years of co-working, was remembered.

51. CALLOVER

- 51.1 All items were reserved.

52. PETITIONS

- 52.1 The Chairman acknowledged receipt of a survey style petition from the members of the North Whitehawk Tenants and Residents Association in relation to the provision of thermal cladding.
- 52.2 The Chairman requested that a report on the issue be provided to a future meeting of the HMCC.

53. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 53.1 There were none.

54. DEPUTATIONS

- 54.1 There were none.

55. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 55.1 There were none.

56. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 56.1 There were none.

57. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET REPORT 2009/10

- 57.1 The meeting considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing that presented the Housing Revenue Account Forecast Outturn for 2008/09 as at month 6 and the proposed Budget for 2009/10 as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (for copy see minute book).
- 57.2 The Chairman accepted an amendment tabled in relation to the report. The amendment reflected recent changes to the national economy and their impact on the Housing Revenue Account.
- 57.3 Councillors Mears and Wells noted the 3 million Housing Subsidy that the Government collected from the council. They felt that this could be perceived as a 'tax' levied on Tenants.
- 57.4 Councillor Simpson noted the many years that the council had benefited from the subsidy. She also noted that Government were currently looking to review of subsidy arrangements.
- 57.5 Councillor Fryer noted a reduction in the gardening scheme for older people. Officers clarified that the reduction was in administration of the scheme rather than to the budget.

- 57.6 In response to a query from Councillor Fryer, Officers reported that the 1.6 million identified in the report would be the subject of a report to the next meeting, in consideration of the Capital Programme.
- 57.7 Councillor Fryer asked if there were to be reductions in the number of Community Wardens. Officers explained that of the 13 posts originally created only 12 were recruited too. Following restructuring the 13th post was redundant and had been abolished.
- 57.8 Councillor Allen asked about the re-alignment of rent charges in anticipation of stock transfer in 2007. Officers commented that this work was required by the Government of The South East in order to access Stock Transfer Gap Funding.
- 57.9 **RESOLVED** – That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Housing Management Consultative Committee accepted the following recommendations:

That the Housing Management Consultative Committee recommend to the Housing Cabinet Member that Cabinet:

(1) approves the budget for 2009/10 as shown in Appendix 1

(2) approves individual rent increases and decreases in line with rent restructuring principles as determined by the Government.

(3) approves the changes to fees and charges as detailed in paragraph 3.14 to 3.20 of the report.

(4) authorises the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing to implement the new rents, fees and charges, but with delegation to make any minor amendments which may appear to be appropriate in particular cases; and

(5) authorises the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing to prepare and place on deposit the statement of proposals, estimates and other particulars as required by Section 76 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

(6) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee recommends to Housing Cabinet that the late adjustment is included in the HRA 2009/10 budget.

58. SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW

- 58.1 The meeting considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing that offered recommendations on the future delivery of the support service for council sheltered housing tenants. This, following a review of the service. The report also included a review of the communal service charges in sheltered housing and details of the support charge for 2009/10 (for copy see minute book).
- 58.2 Tom Whiting welcomed the report and thanked those officers involved for their patience and hard work in negotiating with the Sheltered Housing Action Group.

- 58.3 Members welcomed the report and the close working with Tenants.
- 58.4 In response to concerns from Tenant Representatives about the employment of Scheme Managers, officers noted that a review of recruitment and retention had been undertaken. The results of this review would be discussed with the Sheltered Housing Action Group.
- 57.10 **RESOLVED** – That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Housing Management Consultative Committee accepted the following recommendations:

The Housing Management Consultative Committee recommends that the Housing Cabinet Member meeting:

(1) Notes the proposal, following consultation with residents, to retain a traditional, on site, scheme manager model of service, which will continue to be managed as a non residential service.

(2) Agrees the revised communal service charges as set out in Appendix 1 with effect from 6 April 2009 and authorises the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing to implement the new service and charges, but with power to make any minor amendments which may appear to be appropriate in particular cases.

59. HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 59.1 The meeting considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing that provided information on current performance within Housing Management services and on general policy initiatives underway to improve performance (for copy see minute book).
- 59.2 Beryl Snelling noted that a gas pipe had been damaged during construction work near the Patching Lodge site; she asked if the council would have to pay for this. Officers replied that the council was in negotiations with contractors to recover any costs.
- 59.3 Heather Hayes and Ted Harman noted that the 'Out of Hours' emergency repair service had, at one point recently been staffed by a single contractor. This individual had worked extremely long hours in difficult circumstances and the service to those in need had been poor. The Chairman and Assistant Director understood this to be an isolated incident but would check with Managers and report back.
- 59.4 Jean Davis noted that the electric tumble dryer at Leach Court had been out of action for some time, she wondered when it would be replaced. Officers expected that a repair or replacement should be effected within a fortnight.
- 59.5 Councillor Allen noted the improvement in rent collection and that figures were recorded area by area. He suggested that it might be prudent to move to a single, 'city-wide' figure. Councillor Allen also suggested a more challenging target be set in dealing with cases where tenants were more than seven weeks in arrears. The Assistant Director noted that new targets were currently being formulated and he would take into account the comments.

59.6 **RESOLVED** - That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Housing Management Consultative Committee accepted the following recommendation:

(1) That comments of the Housing Management Consultative Committee be noted.

60. DRAFT TENANCY AGREEMENT

60.1 The meeting considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing that presented further results of the tenant led Chairman's Working Group considering the development and adoption of a revised tenancy agreement for tenants living in council housing (for copy see minute book).

60.2 Councillor Mears welcomed the report and the revised Tenancy Agreement. She noted the work that had gone into producing the document and the need to consistently enforce the agreement.

60.3 Councillor Wells noted that if the relationship between Joint Tenants broke down, both parties remained responsible for the Tenancy even if one of them had moved out of the property. Officers confirmed that this was the case.

60.4 Ted was concerned that Leaseholders were at a disadvantage if they had poorly behaved neighbours. Ted understood that if a Leaseholder wished to sell their property they had to say what their neighbours were like. A poorly behaved neighbour could impact negatively on the selling of the property. Ted felt that it was important that any reported poor behaviour was acted on quickly and the Tenancy Agreement enforced thoroughly.

60.5 Sue Hansen noted that Tenancy Agreement stated that running a business from your home was not allowed. She asked what the case was if someone was running an illegal business; selling drugs for example. Officers commented that drugs and drug dealing were covered by the Tenancy Agreement and were not acceptable.

60.6 Ted noted that the Tenancy Agreement was a legal document and he felt this point should be made clear to those signing it and those enforcing it.

60.7 The Assistant Director noted that the next stages for the draft Tenancy Agreement were wider formal consultation with Tenants and then the production of a Handbook to support and expand upon the meaning of the agreement.

60.8 In response to a query from Heather, the Assistant Director explained that the new Agreement would cover all tenancies (existing and new) and that all Tenants would be affected. Not everyone was required to sign a new document as the issuing of a 'variation notice' would cover the legal requirements.

60.9 **RESOLVED** - That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Housing Management Consultative Committee accepted the following recommendations:

- (1) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the amended draft of the Tenancy Agreement agreed by the working group attached at Appendix 1.
- (2) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee endorse the conclusions of the working group which will be taken forward as the basis for wider consultation with stakeholders and tenants on the development and adoption of a revised tenancy agreement for tenants living in council housing and forward to the housing cabinet member meeting for approval.

The meeting concluded at 4.20pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 71

Brighton & Hove City
Council

Subject:	Allocations and Adaptations Policy Review		
Date of Meeting:	24th March 2009		
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Sylvia Peckham	Tel: 293318
	E-mail:	Sylvia.peckham@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 The current Housing Register Allocations Policy was approved by committee on 6th January 2005. A major review of Allocations Policy has recently been undertaken resulting in changes to the way the Housing Register is to be operated. As a result, the Allocations Policy has been amended and attached as Appendix one for approval.

1.2 This report is to look at the changes made to the Housing Register Allocations Policy. The consultation with the City has been completed and we have developed a clear, transparent and easily understood Allocation Policy that also incorporates the Adaptations Policy. This is to ensure that we make best use of the limited housing resources we have available.

1.3 The policy is based on the principal that it is:

- easily understood by tenants;
- fair and equitable;
- effective;
- efficient and
- legal.

It will also set a clear strategic framework within which we can deliver a sensitive and practical response.

1.4 Housing Management Consultative Committee will need to consider the implications in terms of the prioritisation of adapted/accessible housing, Sheltered accommodation, Local Lettings Plans and Transfer Incentive Scheme

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Housing Management Consultative Committee consider and endorse the report to amend the Allocations and Adaptations Policy.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

The following areas of focus were identified by the tenant-led focus groups

3.1 Best Use of Stock

Households who are under-occupying family accommodation are being considered for how we can best enable them to move to smaller accommodation. In addition we will explore various ways to promote new housing opportunities in the city effectively, for example by advertising private rented properties in the Homemove magazine and advertising new- build properties early

3.2 Communication

We have taken on board the feedback from our user group so that information given is clear, correct and timely. Tenant representatives will be more actively involved to promote such initiatives as under occupancy and assist with developing positive adverts of properties in their area and to provide information on the neighbourhood for prospective and new tenants, to enable them to settle into the community . This will also contribute towards developing sustainable communities as people are more likely to feel a part of the community.

3.3 Sheltered accommodation

People are successfully bidding for Sheltered Accommodation when either they have no need for it or their needs are too high to be managed there.

3.3.1 The proposed solution is to have an assessment process to ensure that only those people who are suitable for Sheltered Accommodation can bid and that any support package is in place from the start. This will mirror the process as for Adapted properties e.g. only those assessed as needing a mobility 1 property can bid on a mobility 1 property.

3.3.2 The age threshold is to be removed as some people need Sheltered Accommodation before they are 60. This would allow flexibility for those older vulnerable people to access the support when they needed it.

3.4 Non Statutory Successors

In law there can only be one right of succession when a tenant dies which means that subsequent members of the family do not have the right to stay on in the home once their relative or partner dies. To get round the problem the proposal is to allow people in this situation, who have been assessed as being vulnerable and where private rented accommodation wouldn't be suitable for their needs, to be band A priority.

3.5 Local Lettings Plans (LLPs)

The Local Letting Plans have not been reviewed for more than 10 years. Some of them may now no longer be relevant whilst there may be other areas which would benefit from Local Lettings Plans. There is a need therefore to review all the current Local Lettings Plans and to identify any other areas which would benefit from new Local Lettings Plans. The process needs to incorporate undertaking regular reviews of the LLP to ensure they remain relevant. This work would take place outside of the Allocations review and would sit within Housing Management

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The tenant-led focus groups identified the following areas for improvement and we have now completed the process of consulting with wider stakeholders in the City over proposed changes. Stakeholders included our Communities of Interest, our partner agencies, Age Concern, people on the Housing Register, and support providers. The feedback from Consultation and the amendments recommended as a result have been agreed by the Tenant-led focus groups.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Financial Implications. There will not be any financial implications as the amendments have been timed to coincide with a new print run of the Scheme User Guides where the new information will be located.

Finance officer Consulted: Neil Smith Date: 07th January 2009

- 5.2 Legal Implications Under section 167 Housing Act 1996, the council as a local housing authority is required to have an allocations scheme for determining priorities and as to the procedure to be followed, in allocating housing accommodation. Local housing authorities must not allocate housing accommodation otherwise than in accordance with their allocation scheme. The amended Housing Register Allocations Policy, which the Cabinet Member for Housing is asked to approve, is the Council's allocations scheme for the purpose of section 167. As there is no specific right to housing under the European Convention on Human Rights or Human Rights Act 1998, there are no significant human rights issues to be considered in relation to this report.

Lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 07th January 2009

- 5.3 Equalities Implications. Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out for the proposed changes to the Policy and it has been found that no new practices or operational changes need to occur.

- 5.4 Sustainability Implications: The proposals will ensure that better use is made of the housing stock and will contribute to sustainable housing solutions.

- 5.4 Crime & Disorder Implications: None

- 5.5 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications: Failure to adopt the changes prescribed in the attached new Allocations Policy could render the Local Authority vulnerable to legal challenge

- 5.6 Corporate / Citywide Implications: Limited social housing stock will be used in the best and most efficient way possible and that the city will benefit from clearer communication and updated Local Lettings Plans.

Brighton and Hove City Council Choice Based Lettings Scheme

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1. Introduction

It is Brighton & Hove City Council's policy to operate a choice based lettings scheme. This is the Council's scheme as required under section 167 of the Housing Act 1996. It sets out the priorities and procedures for the letting of permanent council housing, and our nominations to Housing Association (RSL) housing. The scheme applies to existing Council and Housing Association tenants in Brighton and Hove on the Transfer Register and to Homeseekers applying to the Joint Housing Register.

It meets the requirements set out in Part VI Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), giving reasonable preference to those applicants in greatest need. It incorporates the Council's key aims and objectives outlined in its Housing Strategy for Sustainability in Housing and the recommendations detailed in the Best Value Review of Allocations December 2003.

The Council is committed to a lettings scheme that offers greater choice to all those seeking housing and enables people to make well-informed decisions about their housing options.

Choice based lettings will help improve the sustainability of our housing stock to maximise its effectiveness and encourage residents to have a stake in their community. This scheme applies across the city but also complements regeneration work that has been undertaken in East Brighton and the Neighbourhood Renewal programmes in Hollingdean and Tarner.

Under the choice based lettings scheme, called Homemove, Tenants and Homeseekers are placed in one of four broad Bands of housing need according to their circumstances. All applicants become members of Homemove and actively search for a home. Vacant properties are advertised in a regular freesheet magazine and on the Internet and members are able to bid for properties. Adapted properties will be classified and advertised as suitable for applicants with a matching mobility need.

The Council's lettings scheme incorporates targets set for Transfers and Homeseekers. Targets will be set taking into account the Council's statutory obligations, financial considerations and the housing situation across the city. Targets will be set and agreed in advance and will be reviewed annually based upon projected supply and demand for the coming year.

Equalities

The council's choice based lettings policy aims to ensure that our services are fair, equitable for all our customers. Services should be accessible and useful to everyone regardless of age, disability, gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation or any other factor that may cause disadvantage. This policy has been drafted with reference to the Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (2005) and all other applicable equality and diversity legislation. In addition Brighton & Hove City Council has adopted the Commission for Racial Equality's Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing 2006.

Brighton & Hove City Council is committed to help all people who need assistance to access social housing in the City. The Homemove Team will work closely with agencies and supported housing providers to try and assist customers to access the scheme, and have ensured that information meets the requirements of people with a disability, or sight or hearing impairment and is in other languages. For more information see the Council's Strategy for meeting the needs of vulnerable people, available at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/homemove.

An Equalities Impact Assessment is carried out on all existing and new services including the Homemove Scheme and annual equalities monitoring is carried out on the service, which is scrutinised by Housing Cabinet.

Joint Housing Register Partners

The following Registered Social Landlords are partners on the Joint Housing Register (JHR):

- Hyde Martlett Housing
- Downland Housing Association Ltd
- Home Group
- Kelsey Housing Association Ltd
- MOAT Homes Ltd
- Orbit South Housing Association
- Places for People
- Sanctuary Hereward
- Servite Houses
- Southern Horizon
- Southern Housing Group
- The Guinness Trust

2. The Joint Housing Register

How to apply

All Homeseekers requesting housing and tenants requesting transfers must complete an application form to be put on the housing register. These are available from the Homemove team, from local housing offices (Manor Place, Lavender Street, Oxford Street, Selsfield Drive & Victoria Road) and from www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/homemove. If you need help completing the form, need information in another language or in large print, or on CD, you can contact the Homemove Team on 01273 293130.

Who can apply?

The Housing Register is open to anyone who is 16 years of age or over (subject to the statutory exclusion provisions) although applicants under the age of 18 will only be offered accommodation in certain circumstances (see below).

Priority will be given to:

- People with a local connection found to be unintentionally homeless under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
- Households with a need to move for welfare or medical reasons that make their current home unsuitable.
- Young people leaving care who are referred by Social Services under quota arrangements.
- People moving on from supported housing.
- Households who occupy accommodation that is unsanitary, overcrowded or does not provide adequate facilities
- Households who occupy accommodation where there is substantial disrepair.
- Households needing sheltered accommodation where the applicant has been assessed as having a support need.
- Households with a local connection who have an address in the city, employment within the city or have a written offer of employment or in full time study at the point of application.

Exclusions from the Register

The following persons are not eligible for entry on the Housing Register for the allocation of social housing:-

1. By virtue of the Housing Act 1996 (section 160A) the Council cannot allocate housing accommodation to the following:

A person who is subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 unless that person falls within an exemption specified by the Secretary of State.

2. Any applicant where the Council is satisfied that:

The applicant, or a member of the household, has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour, which if the applicant was a secure tenant of the Council would entitle the Council to a possession order (part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985). These can include:

- ***Serious breach of tenancy conditions: Involvement in serious nuisance or annoyance to neighbours;***
- ***Conviction of using the accommodation or allowing its use for immoral or illegal purposes***
- ***Allowing the property to be seriously damaged by the tenant or other resident***
- ***Conviction of an indictable offence committed in the locality relating to violence or threats of violence.***
- ***Eviction from social housing for nuisance or harassment (racial or otherwise) where this behaviour is apparent at the time of application***

And

The unacceptable behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant.

And

The applicant is unsuitable at the time the application is considered. Consideration will be given to the length of time that has elapsed and whether there has been any change in circumstances.

Or

All exclusions will be considered on an individual basis for any applicant who has demonstrated 'unacceptable behaviour'.

3. Where the applicant knowingly gave false or misleading information or withheld information that was reasonably requested.

Eligibility for the JHR will be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account exceptional circumstances or special needs.

There is a right under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 to ask the Council to review a decision not to accept an application to join the JHR. A senior officer from the Council not involved in the decision to exclude, will carry out the review.

The Homemove Team will write to anyone who is being excluded from the Register giving our reasons, the length of time for the exclusion and their right to request a review of the decision. After the review the Homemove Team will provide the decision, the reasons for it and the facts that have taken into account.

A fresh application will be considered if:

- The applicants immigration status has changed, or
- The applicant can demonstrate that the behaviour has improved for a set period of time.
- The applicants financial circumstances have changed

Who can be included on the application?

- Anyone who is part of the household at the date of registration and is still in occupation
- A partner, husband or wife of the main applicant living at the same address. This includes couples in same sex relationships
- Dependents under 18 years who live with the applicant where the applicant is the parent or guardian in receipt of Child Benefit or has a court order agreeing residency for exactly 50% of the time
- Someone not currently living with the applicant but for whom it would be reasonable to do so, for example: a relative needing care but unable to live with the applicant at present due to a genuine lack of or the unsuitability of the present accommodation
- A carer where the applicant can prove that a live in carer is essential, one has been identified and has moved in with the household or is ready to do so when accommodation available
- Any other non-dependant adult who is normally permanently resident with the applicant

Under 18s

Anyone over 16 can join the housing register, although they will not usually be offered a property until they are over 18. In the event that there is an urgent housing need, a further assessment will be carried out and work will be carried out with the individual to find the most suitable accommodation to meet their need. An offer of permanent accommodation will only be made if Brighton & Hove City Council is satisfied that:
the young person is able to live independently;
able to sustain a tenancy;
and has an identified package of support available to them.

Owner occupiers and people with savings/capital

Section 167(2A) of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the 2002 Homelessness Act) allows allocation schemes to give less priority to an applicant who was financially able to secure alternative accommodation at market rent or to buy a home. Therefore owner-occupiers or those with a substantial amount of savings or substantial equity in a property that would enable them to obtain accommodation suitable to meet their needs will generally be placed in band D. These applicants will be provided with advice and guidance on other housing options. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis and medical, disability, community care and other relevant needs will be taken into account.

Where there are medical problems, applications will be considered in the following circumstances:

- Where it is not possible to adapt the current accommodation to meet the needs of the owner occupier's medical condition
- Where it is too expensive to adapt the existing accommodation to meet the needs of the owner occupier's medical condition and they cannot afford to buy or rent suitable alternative housing.
- The sale of the property would not able the owner occupier to purchase or rent an alternative property suitable to their needs.

False Information

Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 makes it an offence to withhold information that may reasonably be required to assess an application, or to provide false or misleading information. Appropriate action may be taken against anyone who knowingly provides false information.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1988 (the Act) is designed to protect personal data about living individuals (Data Subjects). The Act also places obligations on those organisations that process personal data (Data Controllers). As a Data Controller, the Council and its partners in the JHR are committed to complying with this legislation by applying the Principles of Good Information Handling across all services related to Homemove.

3. Tenants who wish to transfer

Who Can Apply?

Any secure Council tenant or any assured tenant of any of the City Council's partners in the Joint Housing Register living in the city.

The Council will not normally make an offer of accommodation to a Transfer applicant where the tenant is guilty of a breach of tenancy resulting in:

- A valid Notice of Seeking Possession, a Postponed Possession Order or Suspended Possession Order for rent arrears.
- Housing Act Injunction, Anti-Social Behaviour Order, Notice of Seeking Possession, Suspended Possession Order or demoted tenancy (if adopted) granted as a result of the breach of other aspects of the tenancy agreement.

The Council will regard a failure to pay rent or other housing-related charges or debts as behavior affecting the suitability to be tenants. Other than in exceptional circumstances (to be agreed by Housing Management and the Housing Income Management Team), an applicant with outstanding rent arrears or other housing-related debts owed to the City Council or to other social landlords in Sussex will not be allocated housing if there are other applicants eligible for housing under this policy.

4. The Registration and Assessment Process

Homeseekers and Tenants must apply by completing the Council's Housing Application Form. These are available from the Homemove Team, City Direct Centres, from local housing offices and from www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/homemove. Some eligible persons however may be registered without completing the form, e.g. nominations from Social Care & Health.

- If someone is not eligible to register the Homemove Team will notify the applicant in writing giving the reason for the decision and informing them of their right to request a review and the timescale that the request must be made within.
- Once accepted onto the Housing Register the Homemove Team will make an initial housing needs assessment based on the information on the registration form and other information made available.
- In order for this Banding assessment to be completed official proof of ID and other relevant information will need to be provided. This information is stated on a checklist on the front of the Housing Application Form.
- Medical priority is assessed by an Independent Medical Adviser based on the information supplied by the applicant using the Council's Self Assessment Medical form and applicant's GP/consultant where appropriate. The Medical Adviser will refer the Self Assessment Medical Form to the Housing Occupational Therapist (OT) where there is a need for an OT assessment.
- Once assessed the applicant is placed in the appropriate bedroom category and into one of the four priority bandings and awarded a priority date.

- The Homemove team will write to the applicant to inform them of their priority date and registration number and give the following information:
 - Priority Band and reason for it
 - Priority date, which is the date the application is received, or in the case of homeless applicants, the date that Brighton & Hove accepts a duty to rehouse
 - The minimum and maximum bedrooms they can bid for
 - Mobility group (level of access requirement) if applicable
 - Advise the applicant that they have a right to see the information held in relation to the application. If they consider any details inaccurate then they can request a review

Re-Registrations

All Homeseekers and Transfer applicants must complete a re-registration form to stay on the Register. The Homemove Team will send the form within three months of the anniversary of the registration date. Applicants will be able to re-register after the review date, if no response to this form is made then a final letter will be sent advising of the cancellation date.

If the applicant fails to re-register on time the Homemove team will check their contact details. If the applicant appears to be a vulnerable person and/or has a high priority need the Homemove team will visit or contact them by phone or letter, or refer to the relevant support service for intervention.

If there is no contact and the applicant fails to re-register after the final letter is sent the application will be cancelled.

5. The Banding Structure

The four priority Bands are:

Band A

- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by Brighton & Hove City Council placed in B&B or short term temporary accommodation where the only prospect of meeting the households' needs is in permanent accommodation (e.g. the applicant has obtained employment and is experiencing severe financial hardship or the household has severe medical or disability needs).
- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by B&HCC placed in temporary accommodation where the landlord requires the property back or the property is unsuitable to meet the applicant's needs or a member of the household's needs (to be agreed by the Temporary Accommodation Allocations Manager).
- Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by B&HCC making their own temporary arrangements or suffering family split due to a genuine lack of accommodation.
- Overriding medical priority awarded by the Independent Medical Advisor – where the housing conditions are having a major adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the household as to warrant emergency priority.
- Social Services nominations under quota arrangements.
- ***Witness Protection nominations under a quota arrangement and agreed through the National Witness Mobility Service.***

- Transfer applicants under-occupying family sized accommodation qualifying for the Transfer Incentive Scheme.
- Households who are statutorily overcrowded or Court Order (as defined in Part X of the Housing Act 1985) or under a Court Order to rehouse.
- Transfer applicants needing permanent or temporary decant where the property is imminently required for major repair.
- Housing Order issued under quota arrangements as agreed by Private Sector Housing.
- Releasing an adapted property or to make best use of adapted stock – at the Council’s discretion, where the tenant does not require adaptations or where the existing property cannot be adapted to meet the applicant’s needs.
- Move on from care as agreed by housing options or leaving supported housing as agreed by supporting people.
- Priority transfer, agreed in exceptional circumstances due to significant and insurmountable problems associated with the tenant’s occupation and there is imminent personal risk to the household if they remain.
- Severe need – exceptional circumstances and/or multiple needs, which warrant emergency priority – to be agreed by Head of TA and Allocations.
- ***Non-statutory successors – where agreement has been provided by Housing Management and Housing Options that the Council will try to re-house in accommodation suitable for the applicants housing need.***
- ***Retiring Council and RSL employees e.g. Sheltered Scheme Managers, Residential Estate Wardens where the Council or RSL has a contractual obligation to house.***

Band B

- Severe Overcrowding - Households lacking 2 or more separate bedrooms.
- Management Transfers – agreed by Housing Management for transfers on management grounds, to properties of same size and type.
- Very High/High medical priority as agreed by the Independent Medical Advisor.
- Ex-tenants returning from institutions e.g.: rehabilitation - where a prior commitment has been made between Housing Management and the Homemove Team in order to secure the relinquishment of a Council or RSL tenancy on entering the institution.
- High priority hardship – Homeseekers with a dependent child/ren living in insecure accommodation and not having a bedroom and lacking or sharing amenities
- To enable fostering or adoption – where agreement reached to provide permanent accommodation on recommendation from Children & Young Persons Trust.
- Multiple Needs that warrant high priority –applicants whose needs when considered cumulatively are deemed to be so severe as to warrant applicant being placed in a higher priority band.

Band C

- Moderate Overcrowding - Households lacking one separate bedroom.
- Council and Housing Association tenants under-occupying that do not qualify for the Transfer Incentive Scheme.
- Accepted Homeless households occupying temporary accommodation on an assured short hold or non-secure tenancy until such time as the landlord requires the property back or the household's needs are no longer met unless offered permanent accommodation.
- Households identified in an Adult Social Care Plan where accommodation is required to assist in delivering a Care Plan or to relieve other social/welfare hardship as agreed in Adult Social Care & Housing.
- Medium/ Low medical priority as agreed by the Independent Medical Advisor.
- Unsanitary conditions that cannot be addressed by Private Sector Housing Team including lacking one or more of the following; a kitchen (e.g. sink and space for a cooker), an inside WC or a bathroom (e.g. basin and bath or shower).
- Other unsatisfactory housing conditions (e.g. substantial disrepair as assessed by Private Sector Housing).
- Applicants for sheltered housing where no higher need.
- People who need to move to a particular area in the city where failure to meet that need would cause hardship e.g. to give or receive support.

Band D

- Transfer applicants with no other housing need.
- Homeseekers with no other housing need.
- Key workers.
- Owner-occupiers or those with a substantial amount of savings or substantial equity (not withstanding consideration of other needs e.g. medical)

Full details of how assessment and banding decisions are made can be found in Appendix A.

In areas of the city where there are unusually high concentrations of deprivation or vulnerable households with high support needs, the Council will consider giving preference to working households or those with limited housing need. These households would otherwise have less opportunity to access affordable housing. Through this process the Council seeks to help build balanced, sustainable communities and to ensure a mix of working and non-working residents, this will be through an agreed local lettings plan, and property eligibility will be clearly advertised.

The Government has placed an emphasis on key-worker housing and has made specific funding available for schemes to develop low cost home ownership and affordable rented housing for this group. These properties will be made available to applicants who are registered in Bands A - D who meet the qualifying criteria.

The national and regional housing agendas are encouraging new housing schemes to be of mixed tenure. Where the Council has the opportunity to nominate applicants to new schemes, the Council will consider the needs of people in all Bands A - D to ensure new developments have a mix of residents.

Re-assessing need and priority dates

The Council reviews all applications annually. If an applicant's circumstances change they may be moved up or down one or more Bands depending on their need.

All applicants must inform the Homemove team immediately when their circumstances change. If any change results in a Band change, the Homemove team will write to inform the applicant of the new Band, the new priority date if applicable and of the right to request a review of this decision. The principle of the scheme is that no one should overtake existing applicants in a Band.

Moving up a Band

If an applicant moves up a Band their priority date will be as follows:

- Overcrowding due to the birth of a child: the date will be taken from the child's date of birth
- Transfer Priorities: the date the request is agreed by the Housing Manager.
- For environmental health reasons; the date the decision is received from the Private Sector Housing.
- For Social Services nominations, the date the request is received from Social Services
- Medical reasons, the date the information is received into the Homemove Team.
- Homeless Households, the date duty was accepted by Brighton & Hove City Council.
- All other applicants, the date the application is received

Moving down a Band

If an applicant moves down a Band, then their priority date will revert to the date that applied when the applicant was previously in that Band, or any earlier date in a higher Band.

Multiple Needs

As part of the assessment of an applicant's needs, those applicants who have a range of needs will be identified (at least three from the current banding). These cases will be assessed to identify those applicants whose needs, when considered cumulatively, are deemed to be so severe as to warrant them being placed in a higher priority band. Where such exceptional circumstances exist and a higher priority band is thought to be appropriate the Homemove Team, having fully considered the details of the case, will forward their recommendation to the Head of TA and Allocations to seek authorisation that the applicant be placed in a higher priority band.

7. How does the Council advertise empty properties?

The Homemove Magazine and Website

The Council advertises its empty properties in a regular free magazine, 'Homemove', available every fortnight at Council offices and all public libraries, a full list is set out in the Scheme User Guide. The Homemove magazine is also available on the Internet at www.homemove.org.uk and can be posted to applicants for a small fee. Full details of how to bid are set out in the Scheme User Guide which is sent out to all new applicants or is available from the Homemove Team. The Council will advertise all properties as being for Transfer applicants or Homeseekers, or both and set the eligibility criteria for the property, such as:

- The minimum and maximum number of persons in the household
- If there are age limits or for households without young dependants
- The mobility group, if applicable, and details or potential for adaptation
- If applications are restricted to special cases such as key workers
- If pets are allowed
- Whether it is sheltered housing
- Who owns the property, whether Council or Housing Association
- The weekly rent, including any other charges

The size of property that can be bid on

An assessment of housing need is made and the applicant will be informed of the size of property they can bid for, please see the table below for guidance

Size	Minimum people	Maximum people	Example Types of Household
Studio	1	1	Single Person
1 bed	1	2	Single Person, Childless Couple, adult siblings or adult friends
2 bed	2	4	one to two dependant family or single person and carer
2 bed sheltered	2	3	A single person/couple and carer
3 bed	3	6+ (depending on size)	two or more dependants
4bed	4	8+ (depending on size)	Five or more dependants

In deciding the appropriate size of a property the age and gender of the dependants within the household are considered for example a male and female child where one is over 5 years are not expected to share a bedroom. Therefore some 2 dependant families are eligible for a 2 bedroom property and other 2 dependant families are eligible for a 3 bedroom property.

All properties adapted for Disabled people will be advertised across all bands. Properties will have a mobility classification as below and priority will be given to those with a matching need. Properties will also be advertised with notes where the potential for adaptation or further adaptation exists.

Mobility Group 1 – full time wheelchair user.

Mobility Group 2 – People who use a wheelchair some of the time.

Mobility Group 3 – Limited mobility who can manage three steps or less.

Where a disabled applicant applies for accommodation which does not meet their access needs, the Council will take into account whether it is reasonable and practicable to adapt that property when assessing the offer consistent with our duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996).

Homeless Applicants and Property Size

In cases where households have been accepted as homeless under Part VII Housing Act 1996 and have been awarded the relevant Band, a household may bid for accommodation that falls outside of the above criteria if it has been assessed that the property is reasonable for the households needs. The offer will discharge the City Council's duty under Part VII Housing Act 1996.

In addition

- Where there is overriding medical need to support the request the Homemove Team will award households up to one additional bedroom over the standards set above
- No applicants can bid for properties that would result in over-crowding or under-occupation
- Where a household is moving to smaller accommodation, they may be entitled to assistance under the Transfer Incentive Scheme
- Supported housing will only be offered to people who have support needs assessed by the Supporting People Assessment team or accepted by the City Council, and where the Housing Association or support provider offers the appropriate support.
- If there are no eligible bidders over 50 years of age where an age restriction applies, applicants under 50 without dependants will be considered

8. Sheltered Housing

Applicants can apply for sheltered housing using the Housing Registration form or can be referred by a relative, support worker, GP, or by the Independent Medical Adviser recommending sheltered housing.

The Council and RSL partners have a variety of sheltered accommodation specifically for an older community where it has been agreed with the Supporting People Team that a housing and support need is called for.

On receipt of an application for sheltered housing the Homemove Team and the Supporting People Team will register the application and place it in the relevant housing and support need band.

9. The Bidding Process

Eligible applicants can make bids for properties advertised by sending in a completed coupon, by telephone bidding, text bidding or by bidding online via the website. Applicants can also nominate a proxy bidder, and in exceptional circumstances request that the Council bid on their behalf. Full details of how to bid are set out in the Scheme User Guide, which will be sent out to all new applicants and is available on the website www.homemove.org.uk.

Applicants with support needs and those who have difficulty with written English will be supported by an appointed support provider, a Housing Officer or the Homemove Team.

Applicants who urgently need to move and who do not bid for properties may receive a direct allocation. (see section 13: Direct Lettings).

All bids for a property are checked against the eligibility rules, for example any age restrictions or size of property. Ineligible bids are excluded from consideration with no consultation with the applicant. The Homemove Team will provide advice and support to applicants who regularly bid for properties they are not eligible for.

Applicants can bid for up to three properties they are eligible for per fortnight. Bids can be made from the Friday the 'Homemove' magazine is published until 2pm the following Wednesday when bidding closes. Shortlists will be created within three working days and successful applicants contacted as soon as possible.

Once an offer has been made the applicant has the choice to refuse the property. If they refuse they may be able to bid again the following cycle. If an applicant is an Accepted Homeless case and refuses a successful bid (irrespective of bidding deadlines) then the Housing Options Team and the Homemove Team may consider that this is a full discharge of duty. Any accepted homeless case considering refusing any Part 6 offer should contact the Housing Options Team before formally refusing a property.

10. The Selection Process

All eligible bids for each property are placed in priority order. Priority is decided first by Band, second by Local Connection to Brighton & Hove, thirdly by priority date within the Band. Where a property has been advertised to give preference to a stated group, bids from these applicants will be prioritised in band order above bids from members who are not in that stated group. Every bid will be assigned a random number when the bid is made. This number is used to resolve a tie; the highest number gets the priority. If there are no eligible bidders for a property the Homemove team may decide re-advertise the property.

If the property is owned by a Housing Association, the prioritised list will be referred to the landlord for offer.

To minimise delays the landlord may arrange multiple viewings for up to three applicant households per property. Applicants are normally contacted within 7 days of close of bidding. Applicants will be required to bring proof of identity (for example Driving License or Passport) to the viewing. For general needs Council housing the Lettings team may:

- Arrange accompanied viewings, advise on any non-essential repairs to be completed after the tenancy start date and give a target date for the completion of these repairs
- Offer the applicant the option to accept and invite to sign for the tenancy or agree a decision within 24 hours
- If the applicant chooses to refuse, the Lettings Officer will note the reasons for the refusal and the next applicant is selected for an offer. Applicants are not penalised for refusing offers although checks will be made if the applicant refuses several properties or is an accepted homeless household Band A
- Applicants who do not provide proof of identity at the viewing will be given 24 hours to provide proof at a council office prior to signing for the tenancy
- Once an offer of accommodation has been accepted the Housing Application will be closed by the Homemove Team or the Lettings Team

If the property is considered to be a sensitive let any issues surrounding this will be discussed with the incoming tenant prior to a tenancy being granted.

11. How Shortlisting Takes Place

Offers will normally be made to applicants at the top of the shortlist. In very exceptional circumstances the Homemove Team may need to reject an applicant on the shortlist for a particular property to ensure that the following objectives are met. If an offer is not made to the applicant at the top of the shortlist, the reasons will need to be agreed by the Homemove Manager in line with this policy.

To ensure that communities are as balanced as possible.

Local Lettings Plans for specific areas may be adopted. These plans will need to be agreed by stakeholders and will consider the problems that need addressing, backed up by evidence. Properties subject to Local Lettings Plans will be clearly advertised and priority will be given to those that meet the agreed criteria.

To ensure that allocations are sensitively made

In exceptional cases, for housing management reasons, we may not offer to the person at the top of the shortlist. You will be contacted by the Landlord with the reasons for this decision.

To make best use of the council's stock and to reduce under occupation

In some cases properties may be advertised for those who are releasing larger council accommodation or reserved for those who need to move urgently because the council is undertaking work on the property.

To ensure properties are let quickly.

This is important to minimise rent loss and empty property turn around time. Applicants must be available and able to take up an offer of accommodation, applicants will be contacted by telephone and letter, and if there is no contact after three days then the offer will be withdrawn.

12. Time Limits for Bidding for Properties

There is a six-month time limit for bidding for the following categories of Band A applicants:

- Accepted Homeless households, with the exception of homeless households in B&B needing permanent housing who have a six week time limit to bid
- Retiring Council and RSL employees
- ***Ex- council & RSL tenants released or discharged from an institution that the Council has given an undertaking to house***
- ***Non-statutory successors***
- Priority transfers, except those placed in temporary accommodation or B&B who will have a six week time limit to bid
- Permanent & temporary decants
- Under-occupiers who have succeeded to the tenancy where the Council has grounds for seeking possession by offering suitable alternative accommodation
- ***Move on from care as agreed by housing options or leaving supported housing as agreed by supporting people***
- ***Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by B&HCC placed in temporary accommodation where the landlord requires the property back or the property is unsuitable to meet the applicant's needs or a member of the household's needs***
- ***Social Services nominations under quota arrangements***
- ***Witness Protection nominations under a quota arrangement and agreed through the National Witness Mobility Service***
- ***Households who are statutorily overcrowded or Court Order (as defined in Part X of the Housing Act 1985) or under a Court Order to rehouse***
- ***Transfer applicants needing permanent or temporary decant where the property is imminently required for major repair***
- ***Statutory duty – Housing Order issued under a quota arrangements as agreed by Environmental Health***
- ***Severe need – exceptional circumstances and/or multiple needs, which warrant emergency priority – to be agreed by Head of TA and Allocations***
- ***Those leaving hospital under special arrangements have six weeks to bid***

If an applicant does not bid within these time frames, the Homemove Team will contact the applicant to check there are no difficulties in using the system and that the circumstances of the applicant have not changed and the priority still applies. If the applicant still fails to bid bids may be made on their behalf for suitable properties in a suitable area, review or remove the priority awarded.

13. Direct Bidding

If the following applicants have not been successful at the end of their bidding time then the Homemove team will make bids on their behalf until a reasonable offer is made. Some of these applicants will not be able to bid at any time and these are also listed below.

- Special circumstances, e.g. applicants who are assessed as high risk offenders have their application processed through a multi-agency panel. This group will be restricted from bidding and a property identified as recommended by the panel. The panel will make one reasonable offer and if refused the applicant can request a review
- Accepted Homeless households in Band A who have failed to exercise choice through the bidding process within the six-week/month timescale or who have bid within the timescale but have not been successful. The Council may make one reasonable offer of accommodation before duty is discharged, or priority lost
- ***Retiring Council employees, those who have highly specific requirements or who have failed to bid successfully within the 6 month time limit. If refused a Housing Manager and Housing Management will review and proceedings for possession may begin***
- ***Tenants who need to be temporarily or permanent decanted. If the suitable offer is refused Housing Management will review and/or begin proceedings for possession***
- ***Ex- council & RSL tenants released or discharged from an institution that the Council has given an undertaking to house who have not successfully bid within the timescale will be made one reasonable offer before priority is lost.***
- ***Non-statutory successors who have not successfully bid within the timescale will be made one reasonable offer before priority is lost***
- ***Priority Transfers who fail to bid successfully within the timescale who have not successfully bid within the timescale will be made one reasonable offer before priority is lost***
- ***Those who have succeeded to a tenancy and are now under occupying will be made one direct offer. If refused Housing Management will review and /or begin proceedings for possession and priority will be lost***
- ***Retiring Council and RSL employees who fail to bid successfully within the timescale will be made one reasonable offer. If the offer is refused Housing Management will review and/or begin proceedings for possession and priority will be lost***
- ***Those leaving hospital under special arrangements who fail to bid successfully within the timescale will be made one reasonable offer before priority is lost***
- ***Those Moving on from care as agreed by Housing Options or leaving supported housing as agreed by Supporting People who fail to bid successfully within the timescale will be made one reasonable offer before priority is lost***
- ***Social Services nominations under quota arrangements who fail to bid successfully within the timescale will be made one reasonable offer before priority is lost***
- ***Witness Protection nominations under a quota arrangement and agreed through the National Witness Mobility Service who fail to***

- bid successfully within the timescale will be made one reasonable offer before priority is lost*
- *Households who are statutorily overcrowded or Court Order (as defined in Part X of the Housing Act 1985) or under a Court Order to rehouse who fail to bid successfully within the timescale will be made one reasonable offer before priority is lost*
 - *Statutory duty – Housing Order issued under a quota arrangements as agreed by Environmental Health who fail to bid successfully within the timescale will be made one reasonable offer before priority is lost*
 - *Severe need – exceptional circumstances and/or multiple needs, which warrant emergency priority – to be agreed by Head of TA and Allocations who fail to bid successfully within the timescale will be made one reasonable offer before priority is lost*

Refusals following Direct Bidding

In the above cases the Council will make a reasonable offer, one, which as far as possible matches the size, and type of property the applicant is eligible for and in their areas of choice where possible. The applicant must give their reasons for refusing. The property will not be held empty while the refusal is reviewed but will be let to another applicant.

If the offer is to a homeless household the Temporary Accommodation Allocations Manager will review the case and will take the necessary follow-up action.

If an offer is to other categories of applicant the Homemove Manager will consider the reasons for refusal. If there is a clear mismatch, eg where applicant or property details were incorrect, the offer will be withdrawn and the applicant notified. If the offer was found to be a reasonable one, the Landlord of the property on offer will advise the applicant of the reasons for this finding and of the effect that this decision has on their application. They will also advise the applicant of their right to request a review of the decision and the timescales that this needs to be within.

14. Feedback on Let Properties

All properties let will be listed in a future copy of the freesheet magazine showing the number of bidders for each property and the Band and priority date of the successful applicant.

15. Ending a joint tenancy when one party to the tenancy leaves

Broadly speaking the Council will grant a joint tenancy to partners applying together for housing. A joint tenancy remains in joint names until one or both joint tenants terminate the tenancy. In the case where one party to the joint tenancy has left the property and has no intention to return, the City Council may agree to offer a new sole tenancy to the remaining party should they terminate the joint tenancy. Council tenants must contact their Housing Officer for advice.

16. Local Lettings Plans

A local lettings plan is an agreement between the Council or RSL and local tenants and residents that restricts lettings in the area to certain households. This is done to tackle a specific issue or problem that has been identified locally at either block, street, estate or neighbourhood level, or to achieve a sustainable community on a new development

Local Lettings Plans allow the Council or RSL to:

- Identify and explore the barriers to accessing housing
- Deliver better outcomes and improve life chances for current tenants and future residents
- Developing a stock and demand profile of the area alongside the views of Local tenants and residents groups will primarily identify the need for any local lettings plans

Four key elements will be considered when developing a new local lettings plan:

- Selective lettings - there may be some restrictions as to who can apply for certain properties or areas. For example this may involve age restrictions or a requirement to have a local connection
- Making the best use of housing stock
- Developing a balanced and sustainable community - where a local policy would promote community cohesion and balance the needs of existing and new tenants to create more inclusive neighbourhoods where people want to live. This may be in areas where there is a high turnover of properties either within an estate or amongst certain property types
- Attract potential tenants - for example certain properties may be offered with a level of furnishings

Key stages of development

- Developing a stock and demand profile of the area - this may include a breakdown of and information on
- Property types and numbers
- Household type, including customer profile information of residents
- Voids and lettings within last financial year
- Numbers and reasons for refusal
- Reasons for rehousing and reasons why tenants leave
- Where most availability has occurred and why
- Number of registered transfers
- The level of demand for properties in the area
- How long tenancies are lasting
- How quickly vacancies are filled
- The layout of the area and services available
- Social issues within the area and any multi-agency involvement
- An estimate of vacancies expected
- Local targets for performance

Involving and consulting residents and tenants

The Council and its partners will be responsible for consulting with residents and existing tenants and involving them in the development of any proposals for local lettings plans. This may involve carrying out 'door to door' surveys to collate resident and tenants views.

Partner landlords who have stock within the area will be consulted on the need or otherwise for a local plan.

Evaluating the information

The Council will evaluate the information in the stock and demand profile. It will also take account of tenants' views when identifying recommendations to develop local lettings criteria. The Council must also consider diversity and equal opportunity issues of local communities when formulating any local lettings plans.

Making recommendations

Recommendations may include some of the following criteria:

- Setting a maximum or minimum age limit for certain properties
- Preference to tenants / applicants with a local connection or who already live or work in that area
- Preference to tenants / applicants who are giving or receiving support to or from family/extended family, voluntary work, day care, play groups or other support from locally based organisations
- Preference to people who are employed
- Preference to other household types who would not normally be eligible under the Council's letting policy - eg. This could be couples without dependants, where there is a high density already in the area of families with dependants
- Preference to specific groups of people for specific types of properties or in specific localities where this would benefit the community
- Preference to people from BME and religious cultures
- Meeting need of a category of people to ensure most appropriate use of stock

Impact of Local Lettings Plans on the Lettings Policy

Once a report with recommendations has been finalised, which Housing Cabinet and HMCC Cabinet will have to formally adopt the plan and this will override the current eligibility criteria. This will take into account the impact of overall lettings in the district. Any property subject to a local lettings plan will be clearly labelled within the advertisements.

Review of local lettings plans

The Council will ensure that Local Lettings Plans are publicised and implemented. In addition they will ensure that these plans are continuously monitored and reviewed annually with the involvement of local tenants and residents. If a local lettings plan is agreed it will be promoted within the affected area.

17. Other Housing Options

There is a shortage of social housing in Brighton & Hove and a huge demand for accommodation. This means that council and housing association properties are not widely available and usually only go to those who are in the most need. Here are some other housing options

Help and Advice

The Housing Options Team is based around preventing homelessness by offering housing options tailored to individual needs. They can offer specialist housing advice to help keep people in their current home, people wishing to find alternative private rented accommodation, advice for people who need support to live independently and advice on alternative housing options. Phone (01273) 293111 or e-mail housing.advice@brighton-hove.gov.uk for more information.

Mutual Exchanges

The council operates a mutual exchange system for council or housing association tenants who wish to swap their homes. www.homemove.org.uk.

Low Cost Home Ownership

Low Cost Home Ownership can be registered for at www.homebuy.co.uk or call Moat Housing on 07002 662846.

18. Appeals and Reviews

This section sets out the procedure for reviewing or appealing the following decisions:

1. Not to put someone on the Joint Housing Register (or to exclude them from bidding) who has applied to be put on it or to remove someone from the JHR other than at his or her request
2. That a member is ineligible for an offer
3. Other decisions relating to the Choice Based Lettings Scheme, including banding and priority dates
4. Where a priority has been removed and Direct Bidding implemented
5. An officer senior to the officer making the original decision and who was not involved in making the decision will carry out these reviews

Procedure

- A request for a review must be made within 21 days from the day on which the applicant is notified of the council's decision and the reasons for it. The council has discretion to extend the time limit if it considers this would be reasonable
- A request can be made in person, over the telephone or in writing
- The officer carrying out the review will carry out an investigation, and, if further information is needed, invite the applicant to write or if unable to do this, make oral representation, or the applicant may also appoint someone on his or her behalf to do this
- If the reviewing officer finds that the officer who took the decision did not take relevant information into account they will refer the file back to that officer for re-consideration
- The officer will notify the applicant of their decision and the reasons for it within eight weeks of the request for a review, there is no right to request a review of the decision unless the applicant's circumstances change

Appendix A.1: Assessments and Banding Decisions

Following the registration a decision will be made on what, if any, follow up action is appropriate e.g. referral to the Independent Medical Adviser, Occupational Therapist, Private Sector Housing Team, Housing Options Team if there is a threat of homelessness, Social Services or Supporting People. The Homemove Team makes decisions about banding in the light of appropriate advice and the following guidelines.

Medical Needs

Members who indicate that they or anyone in their household have an illness or disability, which is affected by their current housing situation, or who may be vulnerable on physical or mental health grounds and in need of settled accommodation are requested to complete a medical self assessment form and/or mobility form. The Homemove Team considers this form, together with any relevant information from the General Practitioner, Hospital Consultant, or Occupational Therapist as appropriate. Where appropriate the Team also seeks advice from the Independent Medical Advisor.

Assessments are made of the effect of present housing on the state of health of the member or anyone in the household. In reaching the decision we will consider whether the overall effect on the household or any member of the household is sufficiently severe to warrant inclusion in a higher band.

In each case the recommendation is based on a judgement of need. Members with medical needs will be placed in one of the following bands:

Band A

Overriding Medical Priority will be recommended where the member (including accepted homeless members) or one of the household has a medical condition which is seriously affected by their current housing. Band A will also be given where current housing conditions and/or other circumstances are having such severe and major adverse effect on the medical condition of any member of the household as to warrant emergency priority.

Band B

Very High/High Medical Priority will be recommended where the current housing conditions are having a major adverse effect on the medical condition of the member or one of the household.

Band C

Medium/Low Medical Priority will be recommended where the current housing conditions are having an adverse effect on the medical condition of the member or one of the household which creates a particular need for them to move.

Where a household is overcrowded and/or there are other adverse circumstances the medical assessment will take into account the effect of the overcrowding and the adverse circumstances on the health of the household.

Mobility Needs

Irrespective of the band assessment, where a member, or one of the household, has a substantial and permanent physical disability which may place them in mobility groups 1, 2 (see below) the Homemove team will refer to the Occupational Therapist (where possible), for a report on their housing needs. Taking into account the recommendations of the report the Homemove team will place the member in one of the following mobility groups:

Mobility Group 1 – full time wheelchair user.

Mobility Group 2 – People who use a wheelchair some of the time.

Mobility Group 3 – Limited mobility who can manage three steps or less.

Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions and Statutory Duty

The Head of Temporary Accommodation and Allocations agrees with Private Sector Housing an annual quota for housing clients in housing need and who have a Housing Order issued by Private Sector Housing where households have:

- A Prohibition Order has been issued (ie property is unsuitable for occupation) as assessed by Private Sector Housing where there are no alternative measures to render the property suitable for occupation.
- There is a similar duty where emergency housing is essential.

Households will be placed in **Band C** where there are:

- Insanitary conditions that cannot be addressed by Private Sector Housing team action including lacking one or more of the following; a kitchen (e.g. sink and space for a cooker), an inside WC or a bathroom (e.g. basin and bath or shower).
- Other unsatisfactory housing conditions (e.g. substantial disrepair as assessed by Private Sector Housing team).

Overcrowding

- Where the property is deemed to be 'statutorily overcrowded' by a Private Sector Housing EHO under section X of the 1985 Housing Act and there are no means to make the property suitable for occupation the applicant will be placed in band A.

Applicants will be placed in Band B if they lack 2 or more bedrooms and Band C if they lack one bedroom below these minimum provisions:

An independent adult	1 bedroom, including a bedsit or studio
Co-habiting friends	1 bedroom
Co-habiting adult siblings	1 bedroom
Co-habiting couples	1 bedroom
1 dependant	1 bedroom
Two dependants of opposite gender where one is aged over 5 years	2 bedrooms
Two dependants of the same gender of any age	1 bedroom

Please note that if there is a second reception room it will generally be deemed to be available for use as a bedroom and box rooms, which can reasonably be used by a child, will count as a single bedroom.

Accepted Homeless Applicants

Accepted Homeless households owed the main duty by Brighton & Hove City Council under s.193 of the 1996 Act or s.65 of the 1985 Act will be placed in the following bands:

Band A – Where an accepted homeless household is provided with temporary accommodation by the council and the landlord wants the property back, or the property is for some reason considered unsuitable to meet the household's needs, the member will be placed in band A. The Temporary Accommodation Team will inform the Homemove Team that the household's needs would not be best met by providing further temporary accommodation. Examples of circumstances in which such a decision can be taken are:

- One or more of the household has obtained employment, resulting in severe financial hardship for example through loss of benefits.
- There are severe medical or disability reasons
- Case of severe harassment or violence in the current property
- Severe disrepair of the current property

Accepted Homeless households making their own temporary arrangements, in B&B, in short term temporary accommodation or suffering family split due to a genuine lack of accommodation will also be placed in band A

Band C – Accepted homeless households who are occupying an assured shorthold or non-secure tenancy provided under the Housing Act 1996 Part V11 move to band C until such time as the landlord wants the property back or their needs can no longer be met, they are offered permanent accommodation by bidding through Homemove, or their housing situation whilst in assured shorthold or non-secure tenancy warrants a higher priority banding under other Homemove criteria.

Social Welfare Considerations

Where there are social/welfare needs the Homemove Team will consider the recommendations of Social Services and other relative agencies and take into account any multiple needs. They will place the member in the appropriate band as follows:

Band A - Severe Need

Authorised by the Head of Temporary Accommodation and Allocations where members are in 'severe need', where exceptional circumstances and/or multiple needs warrant emergency priority.

Band B – Multiple Needs

Authorised by the Homemove Manager where an applicant who would otherwise be placed in band C, has needs which when assessed cumulatively (3 or more band reasons from Band C) are deemed to be so severe as to warrant them being placed in Band B.

Band B - High priority hardship

To be authorised by the Homemove Manager for Homeseekers with a dependent child/ren living in insecure accommodation and not having a bedroom (see the minimum bedroom standards) and lacking or sharing amenities.

Band B - Enabling Fostering/Adoption

Where social services make a recommendation that permanent accommodation be provided to enable someone to foster or adopt a child, if the Homemove Manager agrees this then the applicant will be placed in band B.

Band C - Other social welfare/hardship

Households who need to move to a particular area in the city where failure to meet that need would cause hardship e.g. to give or receive care or support.

Band C - Delivering a Care Plan

This is where accommodation is required to assist Social Services in delivering a Care Plan (eg moving the member nearer to the source of care and support or to accommodate a carer), or to relieve other social/welfare hardship as agreed between Social Services and Housing.

Other High Priority Categories (applicable to Transfer Applicants only).

Band A - Priority Transfers

Agreed in exceptional circumstances by the Housing Manager and confirmed by the Homemove Manager where there are significant insurmountable problems associated with the tenant's occupation of a dwelling and there is imminent personal risk to the tenant or their family if they remain in the dwelling.

Where the Homemove Manager and Housing Manager agree a non-urgent management transfer band B will be awarded.

Band A - Moving for major works

Awarded to transfer applicants if their property is imminently required for essential works and the tenant cannot remain in the property. Although the Council will encourage and assist such tenants to make bids through the Homemove system we recognise that we have a duty to provide suitable alternative accommodation and will make bids that will result in a reasonable offer within the necessary timescale.

Council Interest Transfers

Band A is awarded to facilitate a tenant's move in one of the following circumstances;-

- Release adapted property – the decision to prioritise is made at the Council's discretion if there is an unmet need for the property occupied (eg where the tenant does not require adaptations such as wheelchair accessible facilities)
- Make best use of adapted stock – for example where providing adaptations in the current property is not feasible but there may be a suitable alternative property available
- Enable tenants under-occupying family accommodation or adapted property they no longer require, to move to smaller accommodation or alternative accommodation under the Transfer Incentive Scheme (information on this scheme can be requested from your housing officer or the Homemove Team). Under-occupiers who do not qualify for this scheme will be placed in band C
- Non-statutory successors – approved by Housing Management, Housing Options and The Homemove for an offer of suitable accommodation.

- Retiring Council and RSL employees e.g.: Sheltered Scheme Managers, Residential Estate Wardens where the Council or RSL has a contractual obligation to house.

Band B is awarded to facilitate a tenant's move in one of the following circumstances;-

- Ex-tenants returning from institutions e.g.: rehabilitation where a commitment has been made in order to secure the relinquishment of a Council or RSL tenancy on entering the institution

Other categories

Move on from care – Band A

The Housing Options Team assists those moving on from care to find suitable accommodation. For the majority of applicants, supported accommodation is appropriate, but some applicants are referred by Housing Options to the Homemove team who place the applicants in band A. Applicants must normally have a local connection as defined by Part V11 of the Housing Act 1996.

Move on from Support Housing – Band A

For the majority of applicants agencies will be expected to work with their clients to access the private rented sector. For exceptional cases, agreed by the Temporary Accommodation Manager, applicants will be placed in Band A. Details of the Move on Scheme Special Rules are available from the Supporting People Team.

Social Services Nominations under quota arrangements – Band A

The Homemove Manager and Housing Options Manager agrees with Social Services an annual quota for housing clients in housing need.

Witness Protection – Band A

The Head of Temporary Accommodation and Allocations agrees with NWMS (National Witness Mobility Service) an annual quota for housing clients in housing need.

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Agenda Item 72

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Housing Management Performance Report (third quarter)		
Date of Meeting:	24 March 2009		
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	John Austin Locke	Tel: 29-1008
	E-mail:	John.austin-locke@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with information on current performance within Housing Management services and on general policy initiatives underway to improve performance. The appendices to the report summarise the key performance results for the third financial quarter of 2008/9.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Housing Management Consultative Committee comment on the contents of this report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

3.1 Rent Collection and Current Arrears

- 3.1.1 This section of the report provides information pertaining to four statutory performance indicators relating to the collection of Housing Revenue Account rent. The four indicators are known as BVPI66a, BVPI66b, BVPI66c and BVPI66d respectively and concern:

- The proportion of rent collected during the year that was actually due (or charged) during the year.
- The percentage of tenants with more than 7 weeks rent arrears
- The percentage of tenants in arrears who have had a Notice of Seeking Possession Served on them during the year
- The percentage of tenants who have been evicted as a result of rent arrears

BVPI 66a. Proportion of rent arrears collected

BVPI 66a	
Brighton & Hove	97.9% (3rd Quarter 2008/09)
Unitaries – Top Quartile	98.4%
Unitaries – Bottom Quartile	97.3%
Unitaries – Average	97.9%

N.B The benchmarking information is taken from national figures from 2007/08.

- 3.1.2 This performance indicator relates to the proportion of rent collected as a percentage of the total rent due during the year. It does not take account of any cash collected to clear arrears from previous arrears or pre-payments taken to cover rent due in future years. This means that it is not possible for the result to exceed 100%.
- 3.1.3 The indicator result includes former tenancy arrears when a tenant has moved from one Housing Revenue Account property to another.
- 3.1.4 There are a number of examples where a tenant in arrears may transfer to another property. These include tenants who are relocated due to serious harassment or who are moved due to exceptional over-riding medical need. There are also circumstances where a new tenancy is granted at the same address, for example where a tenant succeeds the tenancy from a spouse or partner.
- 3.1.5 The results shown for Brighton and Hove are the results to the end of December 2008.
- 3.1.6 The graphs on pages 4-11 of the appendix show performance for the year to the end of December. Below the monthly data for 2006/07 and 2007/08 is also shown as a comparator.

Neighbourhood	Performance December 2007	Performance December 2008	Difference Between 2007/08 and 2008/09
Brighton East	96.46%	97.33%	+0.87%
Central	97.66%	98.19%	+0.53%
North & East	97.69%	98.14%	+0.45%
West	96.96%	98.22%	+1.26%
Temporary Accommodation	93.14%	96.77%	+3.63%
Citywide	97.11%	97.90%	+0.79%

- The table below shows the totals of the collection forecast against the annual rent charged to customers.

Neighbourhood	Annual Rent Charged to Tenants (£)	How much of the rent charged for the year that we forecast we will collect (£)
Brighton East	12,716,214	12,376,691
Central	7,744,150	7,603,981
North & East	11,459,843	11,246,690
West	7,787,749	7,649,127
Temporary Accommodation	278,708	269,706
Totals	39,986,664	39,146,195

- 3.1.7 The figures above are a forecast relating to rent collected from charges made through the year. This figure can only ever be a forecast until the end of the year as only then is the exact rent charge for the year known. This is because during the year properties are purchased and rent is no longer charged, whilst others become empty and rent is not charged until they are occupied once again.
- 3.1.8 The figures above do not include any rent collected from arrears in previous years. There has been a slight drop in performance from the end of September 2008 to the end of December 2008 from a collection rate of 98.04% to 97.90%. This is an anticipated drop due to the seasonal period It is also likely that the effects of the credit crunch are beginning to be seen. To help households the Housing Income Management Team interviews all new tenants prior to key collection. This interview includes offering advice and assistance on income maximisation and financial management including, for example, how to set up a bank account, what benefits may be available and which utility services are least expensive. The actual arrears at the end of December 2008 are £ 859,742 against a figure of £ 905,675 at the beginning of the financial year.
- 3.1.9 All neighbourhood areas have improved on last years result for the same period demonstrating that after a period of settling into the role and resolving many long standing complex cases the team are obtaining the results that have been expected by tenants, leaseholders and members. The team is confident that it will meet its target collection rate of 98.5% by the end of 2008/09.
- 3.1.10 Although the performance for temporary accommodation is lower than other areas the significance of this is far less with arrears standing at £ 9,572 at the end of December and a significant improvement on their position a year before. It also needs to be remembered that temporary accommodation staff have a high turnover of residents and often only a very short period of time in which to deal with benefit claims and resolve arrears issues.

BVPI 66b. % of tenants with more than seven weeks arrears

BVPI 66b	
Brighton & Hove	6.42% (3rd Quarter 2008/09)
Unitaries – Top Quartile	4.7%
Unitaries – Bottom Quartile	7.3%
Unitaries – Average	6.0%

N.B The benchmarking information is taken from national figures from 2007/08 published by the Audit Commission.

- 3.1.12 This indicator shows the percentage of tenants with more than seven weeks' arrears. The indicator is an average over the year rather than a snap shot at anyone time i.e. the end of a month or quarter. This means that the figures shown are cumulative and we take weekly snapshots to calculate average to date.
- 3.1.13 For 2008/09 we have set a target of no more than 7.60% of tenants having more than seven weeks' arrears. In setting the target we have factored in the number of new tenancies each year, approximately 800, and the percentage of tenants who are in receipt of full and partial Housing Benefit. This is because a small proportion of this debt will be as a result of Housing Benefit processing times and delays caused by some tenants not providing relevant information to allow their claim to be processed quickly.
- 3.1.14 At the end of quarter 3 performance stood at 6.42%, or an average of 767 debtors with arrears of more than 7 weeks. During the first three quarters of the year the number of tenants with more than 7 weeks arrears has dropped by 71.

BVPI 66c. Tenants who have received a NOSP for rent arrears.

BVPI 66c	
Brighton & Hove	21.89% (3rd Quarter 2008/09)
Unitaries – Top Quartile	14.9%
Unitaries – Bottom Quartile	23.1%
Unitaries – Average	23.6%

N.B The benchmarking information is taken from national reported figures from 2007/08 published by the Audit Commission.

- 3.1.15 This indicator measures the percentage of local authority tenants who have had a Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP) served on them for rent arrears. A NOSP is the first stage of legal action against tenants and gives notice that unless a tenant takes steps to address their arrears or enter into an agreement with the council to repay the debt then the council may proceed to court action. A NOSP will not be served without attempts to speak with the customer. These efforts will then continue after the NOSP has been served and through all stages until the case reaches court, if indeed it does go that far. The government calls for the indicator to be calculated as a percentage of the average number of tenants in arrears throughout the year.

- 3.1.16 The government is very clear that local authorities must adopt a preventative approach to rent arrears. The aim of this indicator is to ensure local authorities are only using legal action and threats of legal action as a last resort. The government expect local authorities to review policies and procedures to ensure that preventative measures are in place so that Notices of Seeking Possession are kept to a minimum.
- 3.1.17 Although the government's intentions here are clear, many landlords see the serving of a NOSP as an effective tool to collecting rent arrears, as it gives an obvious message to debtors that we are serious about collecting debts. It does not follow that the serving of a NOSP will lead to court action. Within a well thought out and proactive rent arrears procedure the serving of a NOSP can actually reduce the number of tenants taken to court.
- 3.1.18 Brighton and Hove's arrears procedures are well laid out and do not lead officers into inappropriate court action. The government has issued a pre-action protocol for taking recovery action and internal procedures ensure officers follow these guidelines to give tenants every opportunity to enter into a repayment agreement and engage support services, where necessary. It does not therefore seem appropriate or desirable to artificially influence this indicator by not serving a NOSP, potentially at the expense of the overall collection rate. It is instead anticipated that our proactive policy of early intervention/prevention work will stop debts escalating to the 6-7 week point at when a NOSP is usually served.

At present the protocol prior to serving a NOSP is as follows:

Week 2	First Arrears letter
Week 4	Second Arrears letter
Week 5	NOSP warning letter
Week 6/7	NOSP served

The tenant is contacted by phone throughout this process and we will not serve a NOSP without attempting a home visit, even if that only results in us leaving a calling card.

- 3.1.19 As the year progresses, an increasing number of NOSP's will be served although consideration is always given to individual cases. At the time of writing benchmarking information is only available for 2006/07. Extrapolating that data we estimate that this result will place Brighton & Hove in the 4th Quartile.
- 3.1.20 Brighton & Hove's procedure means that a NOSP is generally served where arrears are at the 6 – 7 week level. This gives a very clear message to a tenant who has not engaged that we are serious about debt collection. It also protects the council's interests as we cannot proceed to court, (if we deem that necessary) until four weeks after a NOSP has been served. The objective is to do well at BVPI66a whilst keeping BVPI66c as low as possible. It is disappointing that we are moving

well outside our target, however, members of the Consultative Committee are asked to recognise the achievement for BVPI66a, which is the actual income that feeds into the Housing Revenue Account.

BVPI 66d. Tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears

BVPI 66d	
Brighton	0.11% (3rd Quarter 2008/09)
Unitaries – Top Quartile	0.2%
Unitaries – Bottom Quartile	0.3%
Unitaries – Average	0.4%

N.B The benchmarking information is taken from national figures from 2007/08. .

- This indicator measures the percentage of all tenant evicted as a result of rent arrears. The denominator in this calculation looks at the number of tenancies at the end of each quarter. It has been agreed that we do not wish to evict more than 35 households as a result of rent arrears. During the first three quarters of 2008/09 Brighton & Hove Council evicted 13 households for rent arrears

3.1.22 During the first two quarters of 2008/09 Brighton & Hove Council evicted 7 households for rent arrears.

3.2 Empty Property Turnaround Time

3.2.1 The project to enable new tenants to start their tenancies on any day of the week is now in its final preparatory stages before being rolled out across the division. Processes have been established between the lettings Team, rent accounting and Housing IT to ensure a smooth transition to a system whereby a tenancy may commence on any day of the week rather than just on a Monday, as is the current arrangement. The initiative will enable new tenants to collect keys for the property into which they are moving as soon as they can after repair works have been carried out. The improvement in customer service will ensure that tenants will be able to carry out their move over the weekend if they wish to.

3.2.2 It is anticipated that there will also be a saving by ensuring that the council spends less money on clearing unwanted items from council properties, or recharging for the work, as transferring tenants will have more time to move from one property to another. A further benefit will be that where new tenants collect their keys on a Friday for example it will reduce the empty property turnaround time by three days.

3.2.3 New tenancies will not be charged for the part of the week in which they take early possession of the property. This is an added advantage for them, as they have a few days grace, and has no additional cost to the council as the property would have remained empty until the following Monday.

Empty property turnaround time:

2008/9 Target – 28 days	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Year to date
General needs housing													
BV212- Gen needs	24	26	25	22	26	30	21	25	25				25
Total let	56	53	63	50	45	54	68	59	44				492
% Let in target	75%	77%	70%	82%	73%	78%	76%	76%	80%				76%
Sheltered housing													
BV212 - Sheltered	35	59	48	25	34	33	32	35	23				36
Total let	14	9	11	6	12	15	7	7	11				94
% Let in target	57%	67%	45%	83%	58%	40%	86%	29%	77%				59%
Total for Housing Management													
BV212 – Total HM	26	31	28	23	28	30	22	26	24				27
Total let	70	62	74	56	57	69	75	66	57				390
% Let in target	71%	76%	66%	82%	70%	70%	77%	71%	79%				73%
Temporary Accommodation													
BV212 - TACC	47	67	40	31	38	44	41	36	19				42
Total let	15	17	17	8	12	9	10	17	8				113
% Let in target	47%	59%	35%	63%	67%	33%	40%	53%	100 %				53%
All properties													
BV212 - All	30	38	30	24	30	32	25	28	24				29
Total let	85	79	91	64	69	78	85	83	65				699
% Let in target	67%	72%	60%	80%	70%	65%	73%	67%	82%				70%

3.3 Repairs and Maintenance Performance

Responsive Repairs

3.3.1 The tables below shows the percentage of responsive repairs completed within target time. The columns show overall performance for last year, the performance target for each repair priority, as well as the overall performance and the performance achieved by each repairs constructor. Latest information is provided for quarter three and the information for orders completed in quarters one and two has been updated.

Priority of Repair	Last Year 2007 / 2008	Target 2008 / 2009	Q1 Total Apr – Jun 08	Q2 Total Jul – Sep 08	Q3 Total Oct-Dec 08
Emergency Repairs Completed in time	88.36 %	97 %	97.08 %	93.84 %	97.09%
No of Emergency Repairs completed	8,299	N/A	2,020	1,819	1,853
Urgent Repairs Completed in time	87.40 %	96 %	90.15 %	90.15 %	96.32%
No of Urgent Repairs completed	8,938	N/A	1,808	1,097	598
Routine Repairs Completed within target time	88.63 %	95 %	91.08%	94.10 %	98.48%
No of Routine Repairs completed	13,892	N/A	4,259	4,596	4,925

3.3.2 Top quartile performance for other Major Cities is as follows (based on Housemark Major Cities benchmarking data for 2007/2008):

- Emergency Repairs 97.88%
- Urgent Repairs 95.08%
- Routine Repairs 93.10%

Performance continues to improve with the council meeting its targets for all categories of repair in quarter three and achieving results within the top quartile as detailed above.

3.3.3 At the constructor level Mears have delivered results above target in all categories of repair and are approaching the higher performers in the Major Cities Group. Mears' performance is detailed in the table below.

Mears' Performance

Priority of Repair	Target 2009/2009	Q1 Mears Apr - Jun 08	Q2 Mears Jul - Sep 08	Q3 Mears Oct - Dec 08
Emergency Repairs Completed in time	97 %	97.77 %	97.87 %	98.79 %
No of Emergency Repairs completed	N/A	1,122	1,034	1,074
Urgent Repairs Completed in time	96 %	93.42 %	94.87 %	98.73%
No of Urgent Repairs completed	N/A	1,018	585	314
Routine Repairs Completed within target time	95%	94.51%	97.33%	99.40 %
No of Routine Repairs completed	N/A	2,477	2,625	2,853

3.3.4 Kier have also made a positive step forward in the third quarter of 08/09 and are rapidly approaching the annual target for Emergency and Urgent repairs and have already exceeded the target for routine repairs. Kier are also continuing to manage the backlog of overdue repairs so performance is slightly affected adversely by this.

3.3.5 The minor IT issues identified in last quarter's report have now been addressed resulting in a contribution to the improvements identified above improved upon. Kier's performance is detailed in the table below:

Kier's Performance

Priority of Repair	Target 2009/2009	Q1 Kier Apr - Jun 08	Q2 Kier Jul - Sep 08	Q3 Kier Oct - Dec 08
Emergency Repairs Completed in time	97 %	96.31 %	98.54 %	94.74 %
No of Emergency Repairs completed	N/A	898	785	779
Urgent Repairs Completed in time	96 %	85.95 %	84.77 %	93.66%
No of Urgent Repairs completed	N/A	790	512	284
Routine Repairs Completed within target time	95%	86.41%	89.80%	97.20%
No of Routine Repairs completed	N/A	1,818	1,971	2,072

3.3.6 The Whitehawk Project is a local service delivery model developed by residents, Mears, Brighton & Hove City Council and the police. The project opened and became operational on the 5th February, operating out of refurbished offices in Swallow Court, North Whitehawk.

3.3.7 Estate Action Days have also taken place across the city. This is an initiative which addressed both individual and environmental repair issues. Our partners, Kier, managed a broad range of local needs from small repairs to clear up of common areas. The event helped create a sense of civic pride for the residents of the area that took part. This is an ongoing initiative we wish to develop City wide.

3.3.8 Decent Homes and Energy efficiency

The table below shows performance for other areas of repairs and maintenance:

Performance Indicator	Last Year 2007 / 2008	Target 2008 / 2009	Q1 Total Apr – Jun 08	Q2 Total Jul – Sep 08	Q3Total Oct-Dec 08
NI158 % of council homes that are non-decent	56.65 %	46 %	56.45 %	55.69 %	53.82%
BV63 - Energy Efficiency (SAP Rating)	75.4	75.6	75.5	75.6	75.7

3.3.9 A number of projects are specifically focused on decent homes and are in progress for the financial year 2008/09. These include large programmes to install gas heating boilers and to replace kitchens and bathrooms in resident's homes as well as the replacement of front doors. Despite considerable effort by our repairs team the decent homes programmes have suffered from a slow first half of the year mobilisation start and only now, in the latter part of the third quarter of 2008/09 are we approaching an acceptable level of delivery and quality.

3.3.10 At the end of the third quarter the percentage of properties that are non-decent has improved and reduced by 2% to 53.82%

3.3.11 The full impact of these programmes will continue to reduce the levels of non-decency during the final quarter of the year. Our current projections suggest that non-decency levels will reduce to 49.5% by 31 March 2009.

3.4 Energy efficiency

3.4.1 Brighton & Hove City Council remains a strong performer on the energy efficiency of dwellings. Performance has continued to improve and remains in the top quartile for performance when compared to other authorities. Top quartile for all authorities is 72, top quartile for unitary authorities is 75.

3.5 Gas Servicing

3.4.1 The table below shows the progress of Brighton & Hove City Council, Mears and PH Jones in servicing gas installations. Performance has been maintained over the last quarter. Performance hit a high in October with 99.84% of properties with a current gas service. Seventeen properties did not have a current gas service although the situation is well know in each case and action is being taken to ensure resident compliance.

	Last Year 2007/2008	Target 2008/2009	Q1 June 08	Q2 Sep 08	Q3 Dec 08
Mears Area	98.91%	100%	99.35%	99.64%	99.70%
PH Jones Area	99.27%	100%	99.73%	99.91%	99.76%
Citywide	99.06%	100%	99.52%	99.75%	99.73%

The number of council properties with a valid gas safety certificate remains high. (December 2008) is an improvement of 0.93% on the figure for the same time last year and means that there are currently 29 properties citywide without a current gas service. There remain no properties with safety checks more than a year overdue. The current performance is within top quartile level when compared to other Major Cities (based upon Housemark Major Cities benchmarking data for 2007/2008 which indicates a top quartile of 99.43%).

3.6 Estates Service

3.6.1 In the third quarter of this year the percentage of cleaning tasks carried out continued to be high, to the extent that during this period almost 100% of all cleaning tasks were completed across the city.

3.6.2 The Estates Service Monitoring Group has met three times this quarter to review job descriptions and put forward a new structure for the Estate Service that will deliver and support a cleaning service based on dedicated cleaners, as outlined in the report on this service at the November 2008 meeting of the committee. Estate Service staff are now being consulted on these changes and it is anticipated that the new structure will be fully in place by May.

Estates Service Monitoring Figures					
Cleaning Performance Sep 08 – Dec 08					
	2007/8	September	October	November	December
Cleaning Performance	87	99	99	99.5	99
This data shows the cleaning performance percentage. This is defined as the cleaning tasks completed in the 4 week period as a percentage of the total number of jobs on the cleaning schedule that period.					

3.6.3 The bulk and graffiti removal teams continue to carry out a high volume of work across the city. Links have been established with City Clean's Graffiti Officer who now sends information each month on the most prolific taggers. This information is given to Estate Service Staff and the Community Wardens with advice on how to report this back to City Clean who work with the police to take enforcement action where possible.

Estates Service Monitoring Figures					
Bulk Waste Removal Aug 08 – Dec 08					
	August	September	October	November	December
Urgent jobs	1	0	0	1	2
Routine jobs	191	226	193	208	171
Total	192	226	193	209	173
Target met for urgent jobs	100%	N/A	N/A	100%	100%
Target met for routine jobs	91%	90%	88%	95%	91%
Target - urgent jobs removal in 1 working day of report					
Target - routine jobs removal within 7 working days of report					
Estates Service Monitoring Figures					
Graffiti Removal May 08 – Sept 08					
	August	September	October	November	December
Urgent jobs	N/A	4%	1%	5%	0%
Routine jobs	N/A	31%	39%	37%	35%
Total	N/A	35%	40%	42%	35%
Target met for urgent jobs	N/A	100%	100%	100%	N/A%
Target met for routine jobs	N/A	94%	90%	90%	100%
Target - urgent jobs removal in 1 working day of report					
Target - routine jobs removal within 7 working days of report					

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Performance report will be presented to customers at the next round of Housing Management Area Panels.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Most performance measures discussed in this report have financial implications which will be included in the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) forecast. For example, any improvement in turnaround times or reductions in empty property numbers increases the amount of rent collected. Improvements in performance will, in general, lead to more resources being available for tenants' services in the future.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks 20 February 2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.1 There are none

Lawyer consulted: Deborah Jones Date: 5 December 2008

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There are no direct Equalities Implications arising from this report

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct risk and opportunity management implications arising from this report

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.6 There are no direct Corporate or Citywide implications arising from this report.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Not applicable to this report.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 These are contained within the body of the report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Housing Management Performance Reports - Charts

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Housing Management Performance Report - charts

24 March 2009

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NI 158 % of non-decent council homes (formerly BV184a)	3
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (Citywide)	4
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BV 66b - % of tenants with more than 7 weeks' rent arrears	10
⁵¹ BV 66c - % of tenants in arrears who have had notices seeking possession served	11
BV 212 - Average time in days to relet local authority housing	12
% of properties with a current gas safety certificate (Citywide)	13

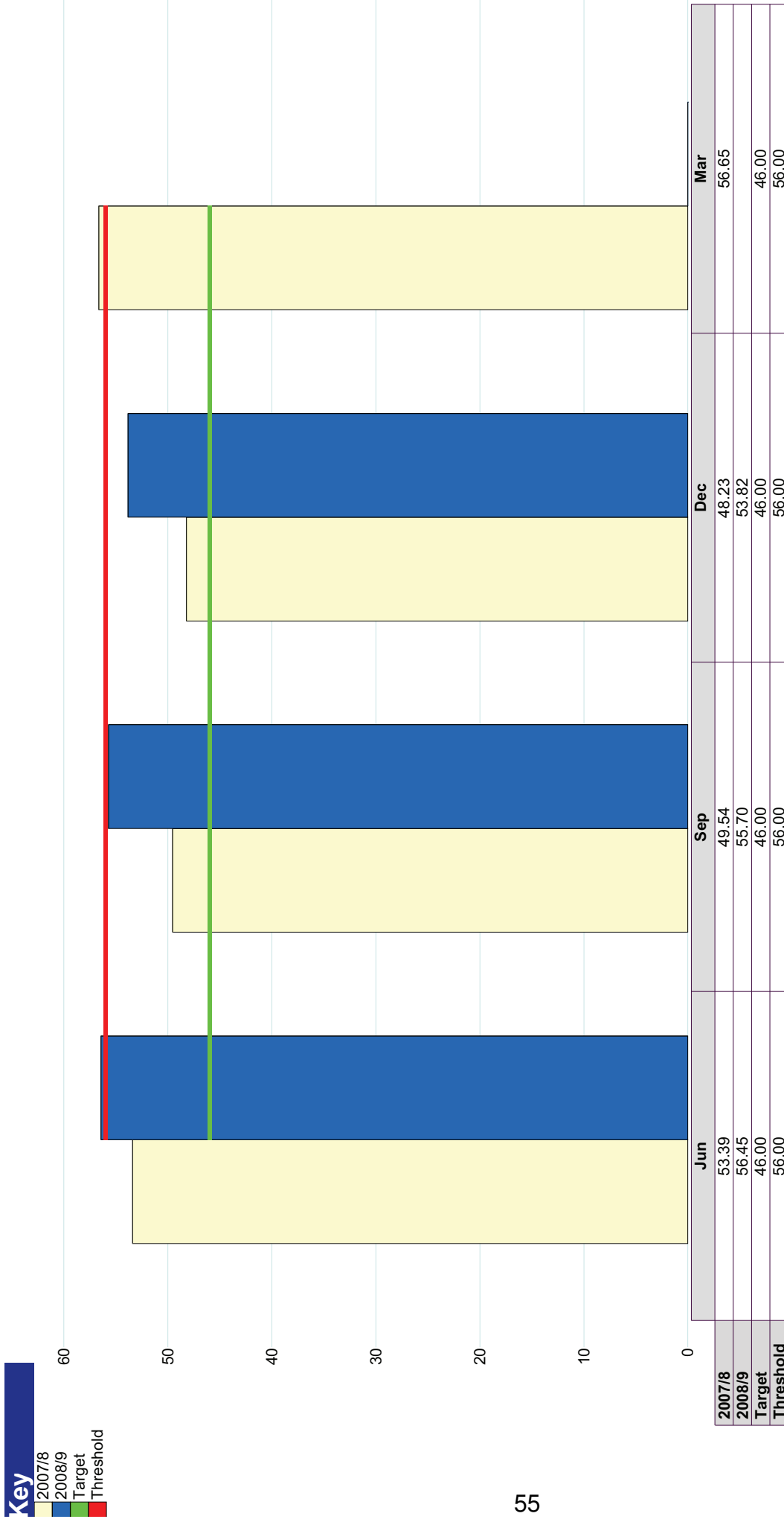
Key to Graphs

The graphs shown on pages 3- 13 display the council's performance against the indicators listed above. The green line on the graphs represents the target we aim to achieve, which is set each year in agreement between service managers, directors and elected members.

The red line denotes a "threshold" level of performance, which represents a significant variation from target and means action needs to be taken to bring about improvement. This level is set in agreement between service managers and the corporate performance team.

The yellow bars show monthly performance during the financial year of 2007/08, and the blue bars show performance during each month of 2008/09.

NI 158 % of non-decent council homes (formerly BV184a)

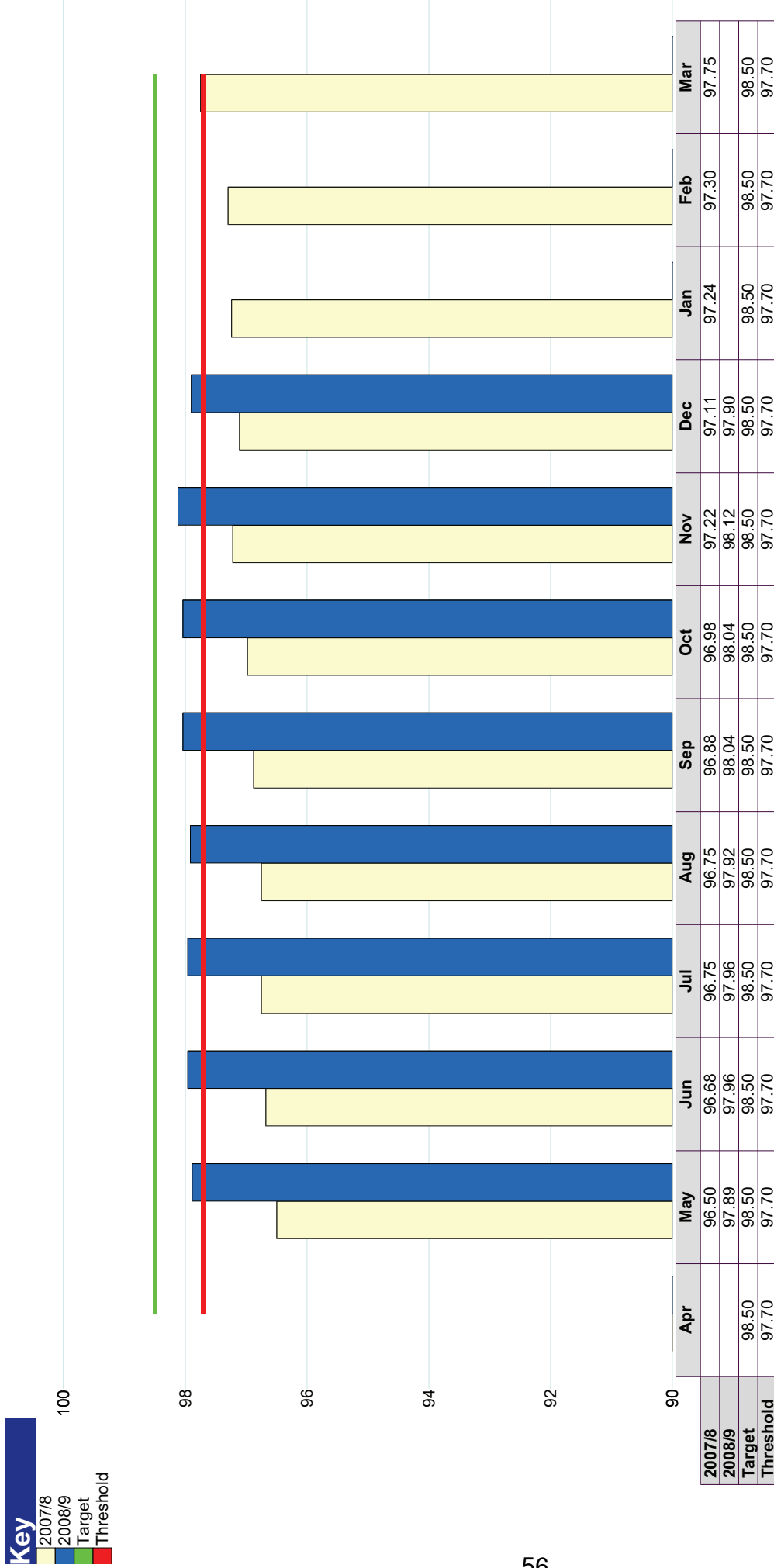


Comments

This indicator is part of Brighton & Hove's Local Area Agreement to ensure more homes meet the Decent Homes Standard. Actions to reach the target of 46% non-decent council homes in 2008/09 include:

- Ensure tenants and leaseholders are at the heart of the decision-making process on all maintenance and improvement works to the stock
- Prioritise the capital works programme over 30 years to meet, as far as possible, Decent Homes Standard
- Reduce unit repair and planned maintenance costs and consultancy fees, saving an estimated £156 million over 30 years
- Improve the ratio between capital works and responsive repairs

BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (Citywide)



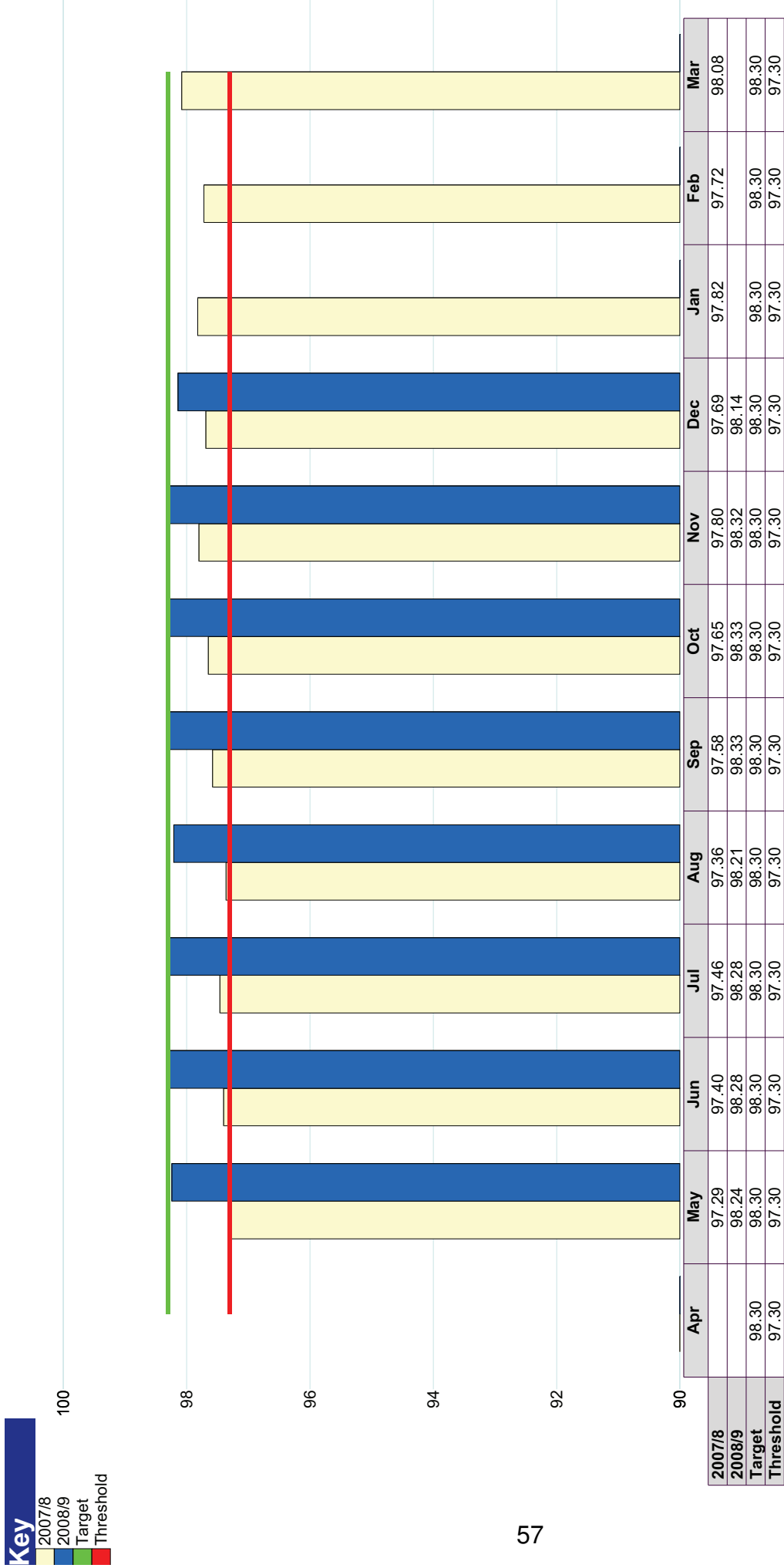
Comment

This indicator measures the rent collected by the Authority as a proportion of the rents owed on local authority-owned dwellings across the city.

Citywide, the total rent due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 will be £40.78m. The council's target is to collect 98.5% of this amount over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph).

See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

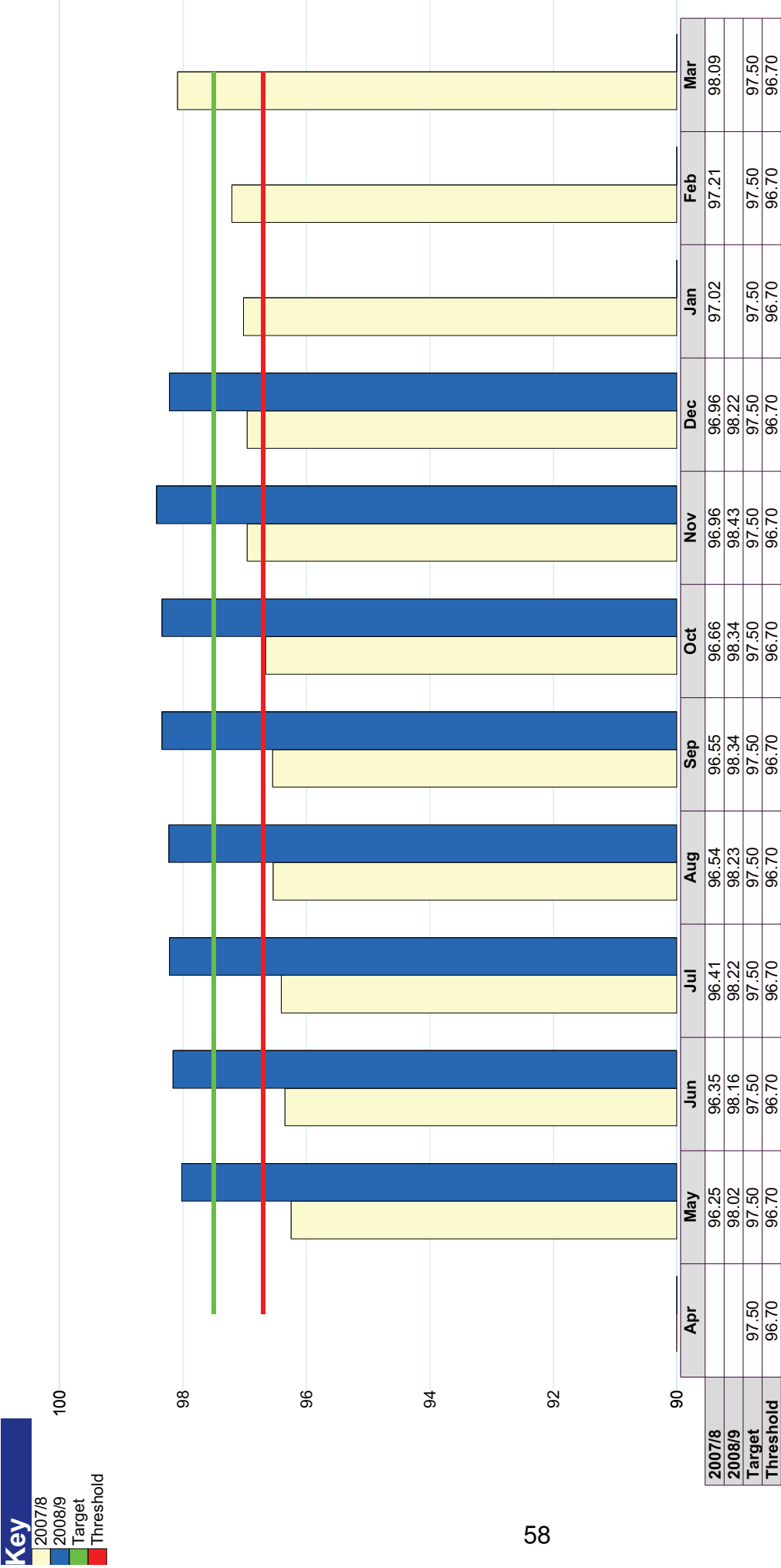
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (North)



Comment

In the North region of the city, the total rent and arrears due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 is approximately £11.6m. The council's target is to collect 98.3% of this amount in this region over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph). See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

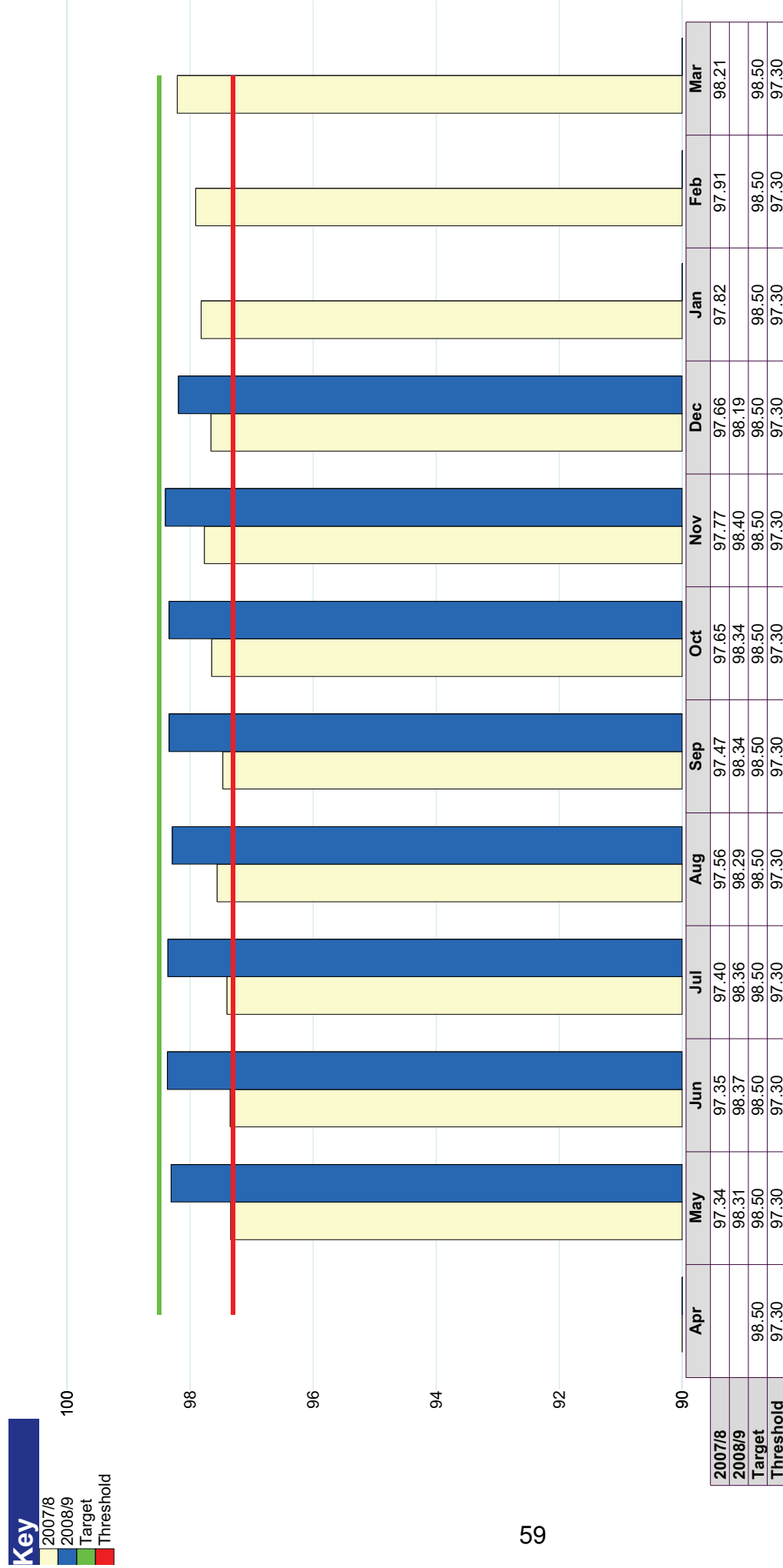
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (West)



Comment

In the West region of the city, the total rent and arrears due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 is approximately £7.9m. The council's target is to collect 97.5% of this amount in this region over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph). See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

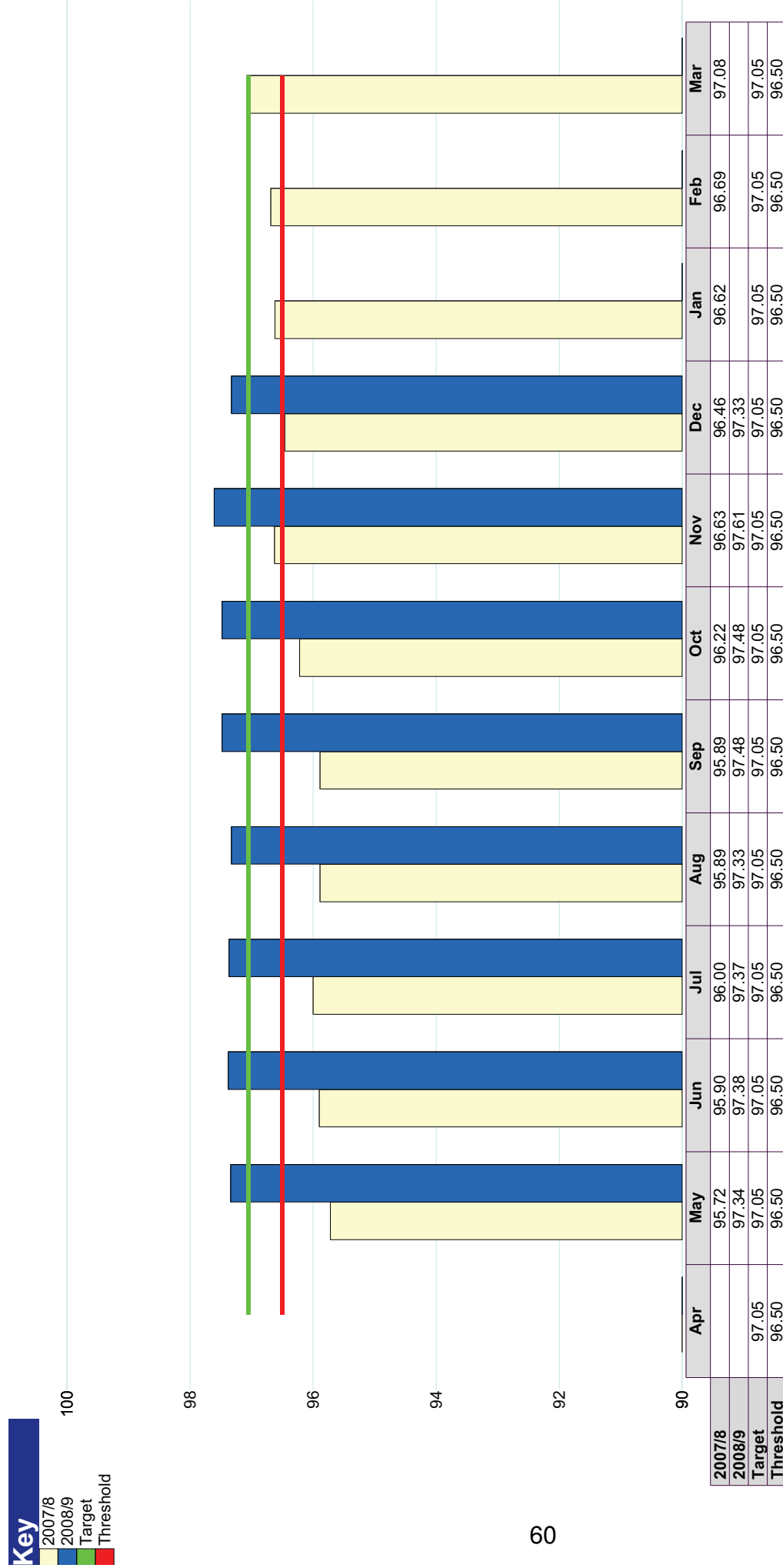
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (Central)



Comment

In the Central region of the city, the total rent and arrears due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 is approximately £7.8m. The council's target is to collect 98.5% of this amount in this region over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph). See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (East)



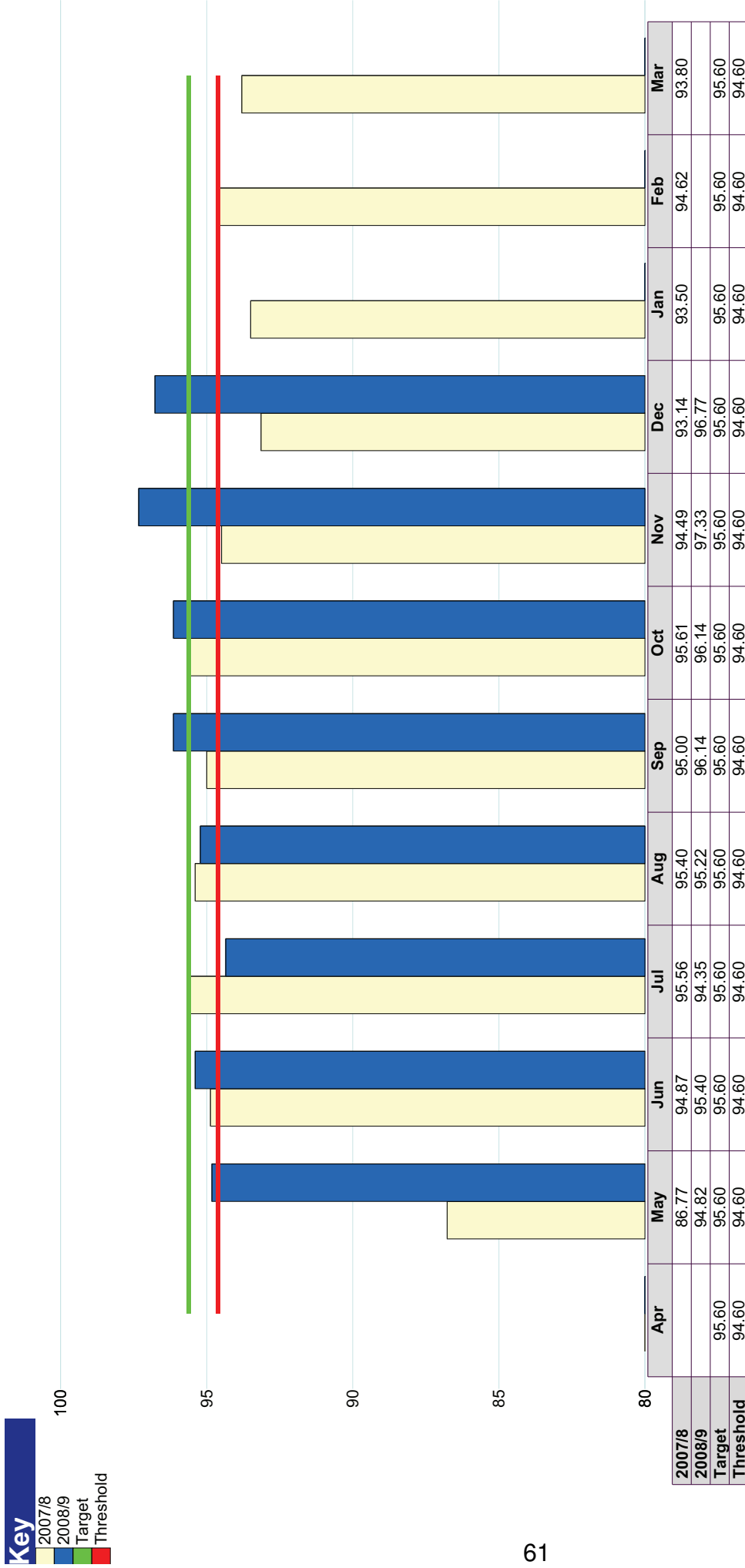
Comment

In the East region of the city, the total rent and arrears due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 is approximately £12.9m.

The council's target is to collect 97.05% of this amount in this region over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph).

See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

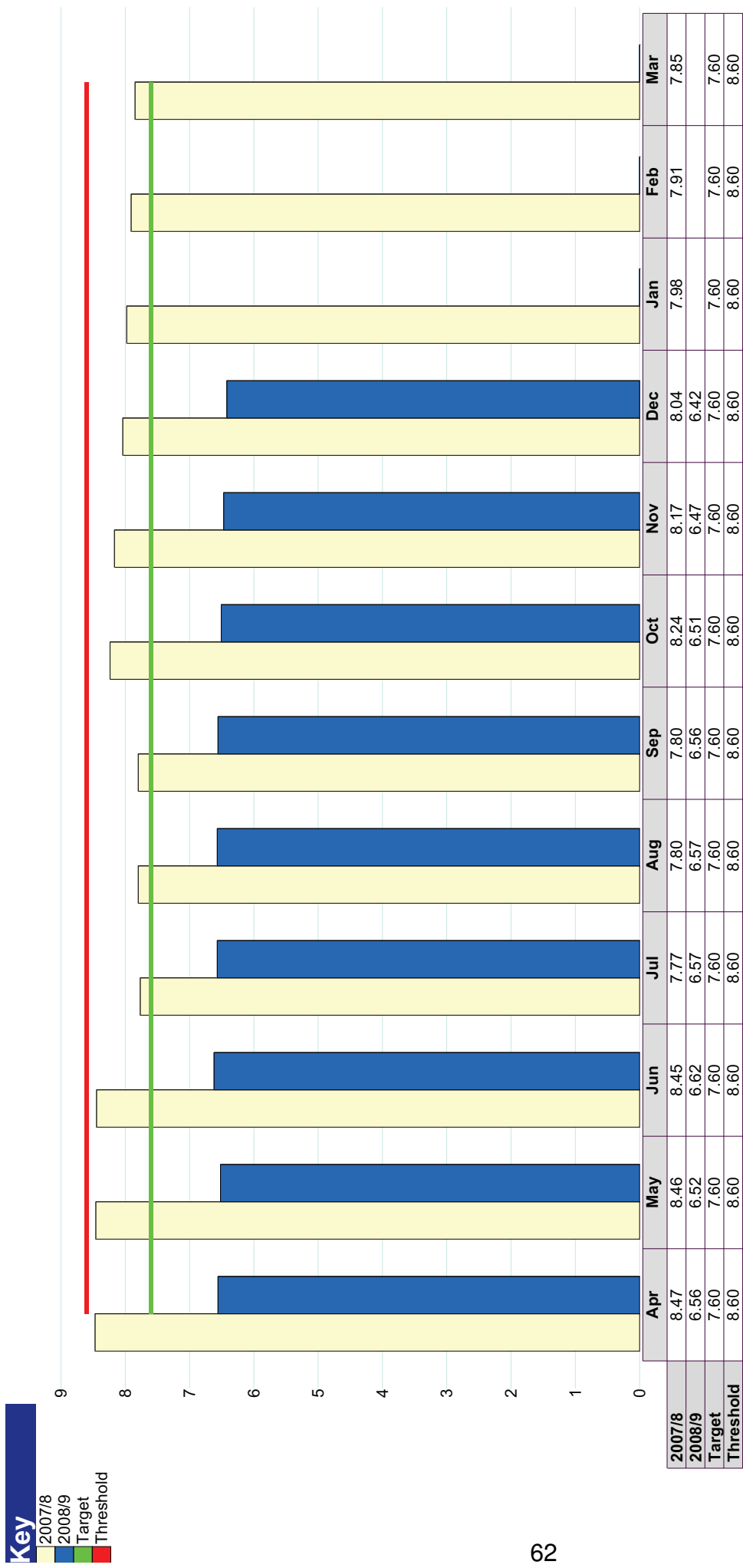
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (temporary accommodation)



Comment

For temporary accommodation, the total rent and arrears due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 is approximately £391,000. The council's target is to collect 95.6% of this amount from temporary accommodation over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph). See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

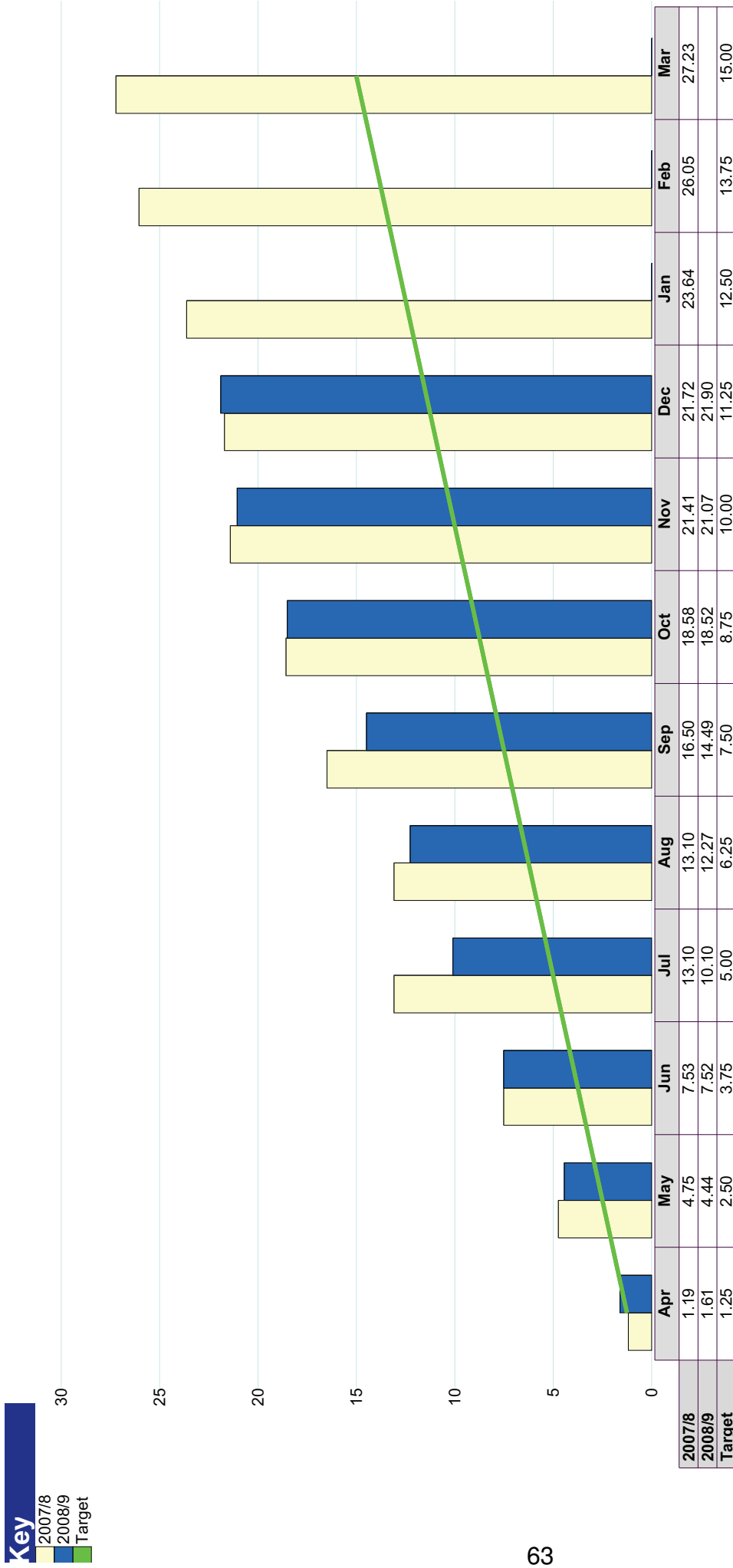
BV 66b - % of tenants with more than 7 weeks' rent arrears



Comments

This indicator measures the number of tenants with 7 weeks or more gross rent arrears as a percentage of the total number of tenants. In Brighton & Hove, there are roughly 12,200 tenants, of which around 800 (6.6%) are in more than 7 weeks gross rent arrears. See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

BV 66c - % of tenants in arrears who have had notices seeking possession served

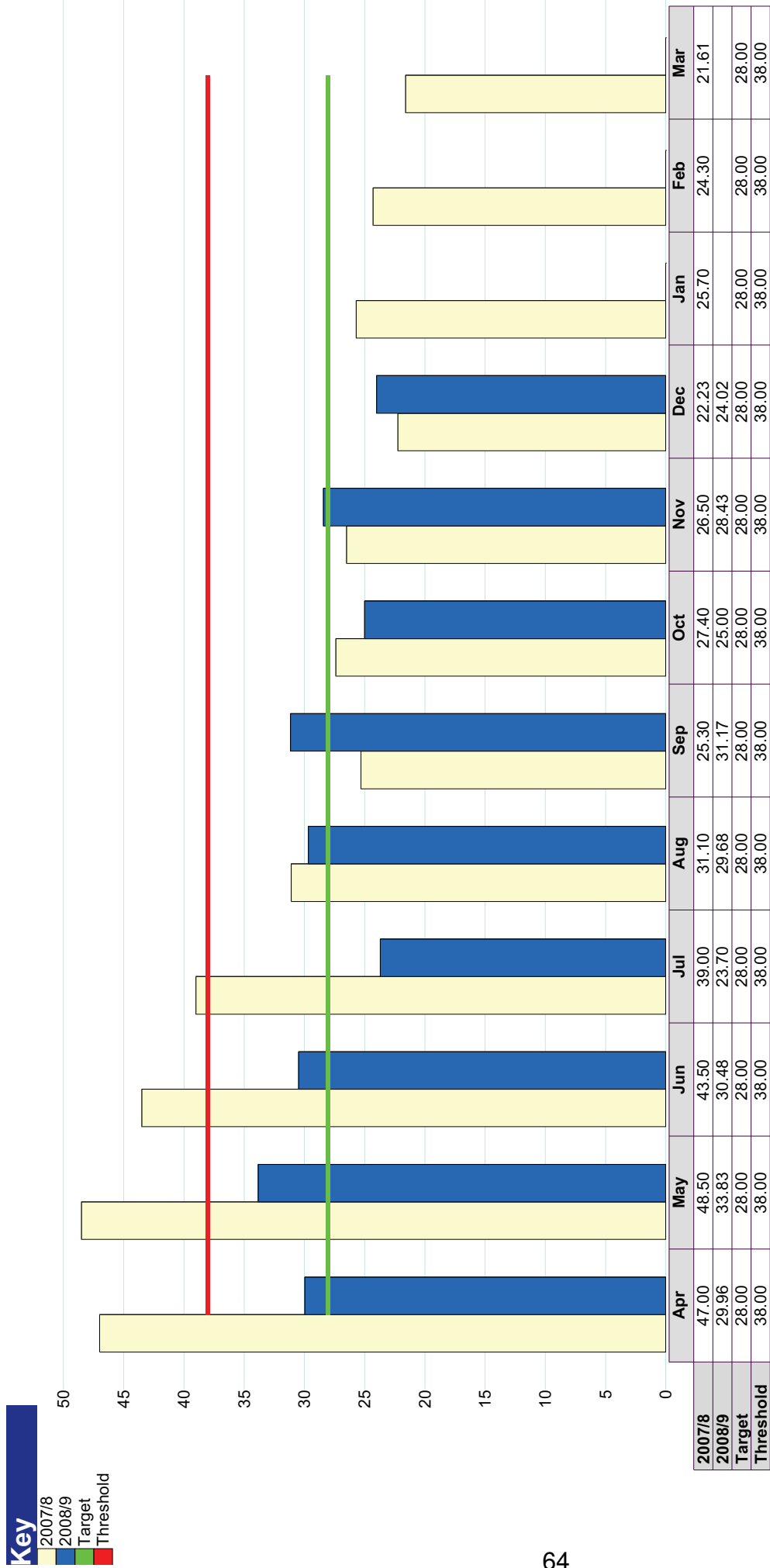


Comments

This indicator measures the number of tenants who have had notice seeking possession served as a result of being in arrears as a percentage of the total number of tenants who are in arrears. Notices seeking possession are served as necessary throughout the year, so the number the council serves increases as the year progresses from April to March. Over the course of the year, the council aims to serve notices seeking possession to no more than 15% of tenants in arrears (as indicated by the green line).

See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

BV 212 - Average time in days to relet local authority housing



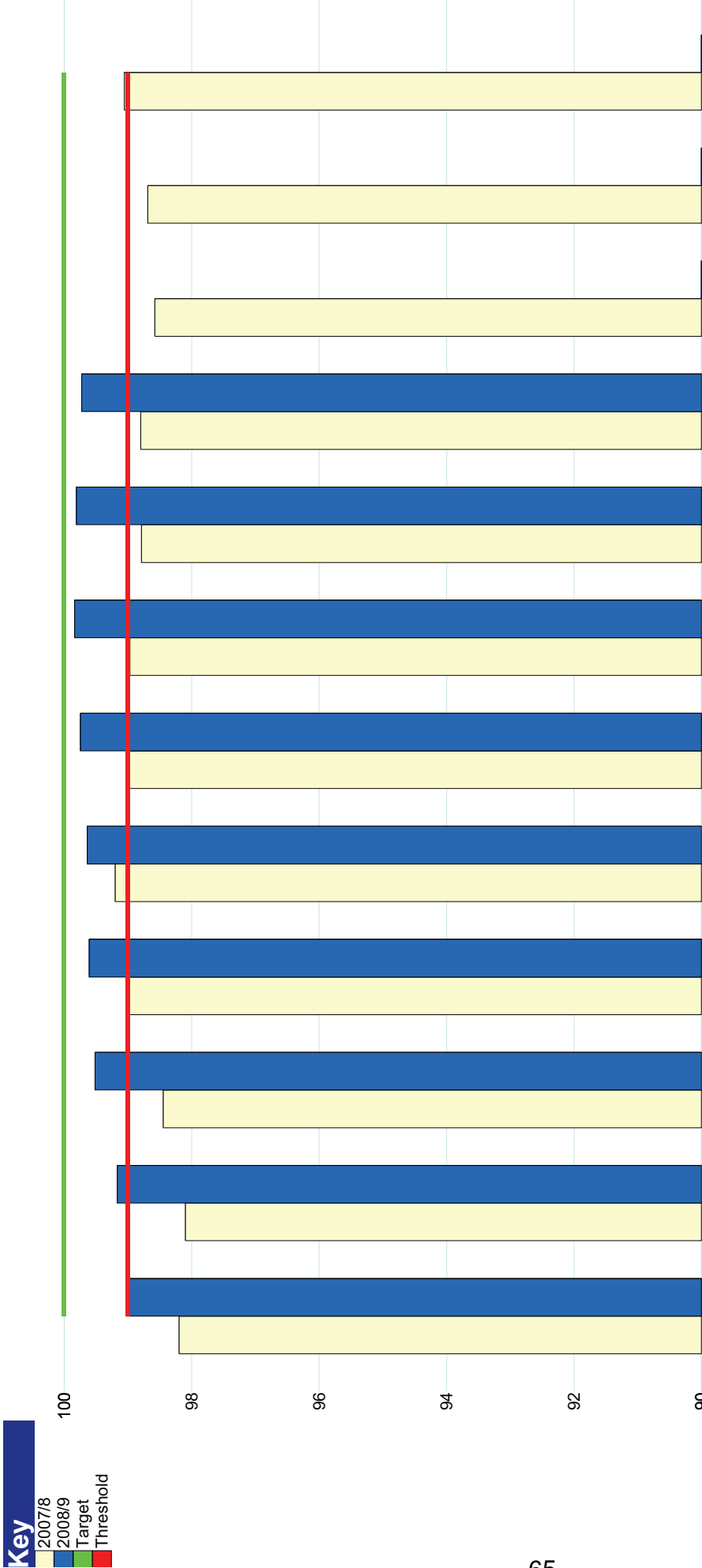
Comments

This indicator measures the average number of days to relet local authority homes once they have become vacant. This includes supported and sheltered accommodation, but excludes properties undergoing major repairs.

The council aims to achieve an average relet time of 28 days or less (as represented by the green line on the graph).

See the "Empty Property Turnaround Time" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

% of properties with a current gas safety certificate (Citywide)



	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2007/8	98.20	98.10	98.45	99.03	99.20	99.03	98.97	98.79	98.80	98.58	98.69	99.06
2008/9	99.02	99.17	99.52	99.61	99.64	99.75	99.84	99.81	99.73	100.00	100.00	100.00
Target	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Threshold	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00

Comments

This indicator measures the percentage of local authority homes with gas pipework or equipment for which there is a current gas safety certificate. The council aims to ensure that all relevant properties have up to date gas safety certificates. There are approximately 10,600 such properties in Brighton & Hove.

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Agenda Item 73

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Sheltered Housing Focus Group update
Date of Meeting: 24 March 2009
Report of: Director of Adult Social Care & Housing
Contact Officer: Name: Mr Martin Reid Tel: 29-3321
E-mail: Martin.reid@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Housing Management Consultative Committee on the work of the Sheltered Housing Focus Group looking at issues raised by tenants concerning council owned sheltered housing in the City.
- 1.2 Housing Management Consultative Committee on 23 September 2008 considered an update report on the work of the Sheltered Housing Focus Group. The Committee noted that officers would arrange visits to the sheltered housing schemes with shared facilities for the Cabinet Member for Housing.
- 1.3 Visits to sheltered housing schemes with shared facilities and others suggested by the members of the Focus Group have now been undertaken. This paper reports on the outcome of these visits and actions arising in line with Focus Group recommendations.
- 1.4 Key proposals include: Re-letting empty scheme manager flats in 7 schemes; Feasibility studies into providing self contained bathing facilities in 3 schemes currently with shared facilities.
- 1.5 A range of scheme specific issues arose from the visits which will be taken forward separately.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the progress of the Sheltered Housing Focus Group following visits to sheltered housing schemes detailed in this report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Housing Management Sub Committee 15th January 2008 considered reports from the initial Chairman's Working Groups. At the Housing Management Sub-Committee on 11 March 2008 the Chairman announced the creation of a Working Group for Sheltered Housing to operate in a similar way to those already reviewing other areas.
- 3.2 Following this meeting, a focus group consisting tenant representatives and officers was set up to work with the Head of Housing Strategy to undertake a review of issues arising concerning council owned sheltered housing in the City.
- 3.3 In line with other previous groups the Sheltered Housing Focus Group consisted of members (and deputies) drawn from each Area Panel, the High Rise Action Group and the Sheltered Housing Action Group.
- 3.4 The Focus Group used the points arising from the Sheltered Housing Action Group Tenants only meeting on 13 February 2008 to frame meeting topics and the Group's Work Plan.
- 3.5 The first meeting of the Focus Group took place on 11 April 2008. There were five subsequent meetings. The Focus Group and tenants representatives presented their work to the Cabinet Member for Housing, at a meeting that took place on 20th August 2008. Update reports on the work of the Group were considered by Housing Management Consultative Committee on 22 July 2008 and 23 September 2008.
- 3.6 A number of key themes emerged from the meetings which tenant representatives wished to see addressed. These included the suggestion from tenants on the Focus Group that the Cabinet Member for Housing visit individual sheltered schemes which still have shared facilities and others identified by the Group.
- 3.7 Schemes identified by members of the Focus Group and visited by the Cabinet Member for Housing were: Ainsworth House (22 December 2008); Broadfields and Laburnum Grove (16 January 2009); Woods House, Muriel House, Evelyn Court and Hazel Holt (9 February 2009); Jubilee Court, Jasmine Court, Southease, Stonehurst Court (20 February 2009).
- 3.8 Residents of each scheme were contacted prior to the visits and offered the opportunity to meet with Cabinet Member for Housing. Scheme managers were also present with keys being made available for empty flats and any empty scheme manager accommodation.

- 3.9 Tenants on the Focus Group and most of those that met with Cabinet Member for Housing on scheme visits felt strongly that sheltered housing with shared bathing facilities was inappropriate accommodation to meet today's needs and aspirations. Sheltered housing with shared facilities can prove very difficult to let when it becomes vacant. Residents in a number of schemes fed back that the demographic mix of the scheme was affected when flats with shared facilities were let as their experience was that more men were prepared to accept this accommodation than women.
- 3.10 Of the schemes visited the following had some shared bathing facilities: Ainsworth House; Broadfields; Laburnum Grove; Jasmine Court; Jubilee Court; Evelyn Court and Hazel Holt.
- 3.11 Of these, the following have been subject to further detailed feasibility work into the potential for self containing bathing facilities as part of the HRA Capital Programme: Laburnum Grove; Jasmine Court and Hazel Holt. This additional feasibility work is being undertaken on the basis that visits identified these schemes as the most likely to be able to deliver self contained bathing facilities without major structural works on the properties.
- 3.12 Housing Management surveyors and Housing Adaptations Team have visited the three schemes to undertake initial feasibility studies. Follow up works will include finalising technical specification, pricing works are bringing forward a proposed programme of works.
- 3.13 The 2009/10 HRA Capital Programme paper, also to be considered on this HMCC agenda, includes provision to undertake feasibility and allow for alteration of internal layout of flats in Laburnum Grove, Jasmine Court and Hazel Holt to provide a shower room in the bedsits.
- 3.14 Options for the remaining schemes which did not present as straightforward opportunities for self containing will continue to be kept under review in consultation with tenants.
- 3.15 As part of the visits and wider Focus Group the number of empty sheltered scheme manager flats remaining empty was a significant issue. Scheme manager flats are empty in 7 sheltered schemes across the city. Following agreement on the future provision of sheltered scheme manager services these empty scheme manager flats can now be considered for re-letting. (Letting one of them will require re-siting of scheme manager 'office' facilities.)
- 3.16 A proposal arising from discussion with tenants was that these properties should be targeted at older households prepared to give up larger family homes. It is proposed that allocation of these properties be managed on a project basis, within allocations policy, targeting under-occupiers and subject to the sheltered housing assessment process.

- 3.17 The sheltered housing assessment process has been put in place in response to tenant concerns to ensure that only those people who are suitable for sheltered accommodation can bid for it and that any support package required is in place from commencement of tenancy. This is covered in more detail in the Allocations and Adaptations Policy Review papers also to be considered at this meeting.
- 3.18 Scheme specific issues were raised on each of the visits. It is not proposed to identify and address each of these in this paper. They are being followed up separately. However, as a flavour of the matters arising some of the points raised by tenants included – this is not an exhaustive list: Accessibility of common areas within and around schemes was raised as a particular issue at Ainsworth House, Broadfields and Jubilee Court; Accessibility of shared bathing facilities (which varied in age and quality) arose as an issue in most of the schemes where these were present; Woods House residents would like the Council to investigate re-use of public toilet facilities adjacent to the block as a scooter store; At Broadfields, Southease and Ainsworth the quality of grounds maintenance was raised as an issue. Repair of structure and exterior was raised at Broadfields and Elwyn Jones Court. The issue of parking, in particular disabled parking, was raised at Laburnum Grove, Stonehurst Court and Woods House.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 As part of the work of the Sheltered Housing Focus Group and at the request of tenant representatives on the Group, informal tenant consultation events organised by Supporting People and Housing Management took place across all the sheltered housing schemes owned by Brighton & Hove City Council.
- 4.2 The smaller group discussion format of the roadshows was welcomed by many residents, especially those who do not usually attend more formal consultation events or meetings.
- 4.3 Residents were invited to meet with the Cabinet Member for Housing on her visits to the schemes detailed in this report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations in this report, however some of the proposals put forward do have financial implications. The HRA Capital Programme 2009/10, also being presented at this meeting, includes provision for feasibility studies and alternate layouts to include shower rooms in the sheltered schemes identified in this report. The proposal to re-let empty scheme manager flats in 7 schemes will reduce the loss of rental income from these properties by approximately £22,000 per annum.

- 5.1 Financial implications from scheme specific issues will be reviewed as these issues are taken forward.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen, Principal Accountant Date: 11/03/09

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 As the report is for noting there are no significant legal implications. Further no individual's human rights are adversely affected.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 10/03/09

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Any policy or strategy development arising from the work reported above will be subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report. Housing is one of the 12 key objectives in the Council's Sustainability Strategy which aims 'to ensure that everyone has access to decent affordable housing that meets their needs'.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Any policy or strategy development work arising from the work of the Focus Group will be undertaken with due regard to appropriate risk assessment requirements.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The work of this Focus Group reflects the priorities and aims of the 2020 Community Strategy and Council's strategic goals of improving housing in the City and ensuring that residents have a healthy living environment.

Subject: HRA Updated 2009/10 Capital Programme
Date of Meeting: 24 March 2009
Report of: Director of Adult Social Care & Housing
Contact Officer: Name: David Gray Tel: 29-3857
E-mail: david.gray@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for a revised 2009/10 Capital Programme for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which takes into consideration the latest resources available and investment priorities.
- 1.2 The council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) relates to the council's landlord duties in respect of approximately 12,320 properties and 2,230 leasehold properties.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee recommend that Cabinet:
(1) approve the HRA revised capital programme of £20.613 million for 2009/10.

3. HRA REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10

SUMMARY

- 3.1 The HRA Capital Programme budget has been set with the overall aim of 'achieving excellence in Housing Management', in accordance with the 30 year business plan and to maximise delivery of the core priorities in the new Housing Management Service Improvement Plan. The 5 core priorities are:
 1. Improve services to an excellent standard, with residents at the heart of everything we do
 2. Improve the quality and sustainability of our homes and neighbourhoods
 3. Deliver value for money services and maintain a sustainable 30 year business plan
 4. Make best use of our housing stock to address housing need
 5. Ensure that social housing provides a platform for reducing inequality and creating opportunity

- 3.2 The capital programme responds to tenant priorities such as provision for the Estate Development Budget, energy efficiency, electrical works, sheltered accommodation improvements as well as urgent health and safety works and Decent Homes works such as kitchens, bathrooms and new doors.
- 3.3 This programme proposes a significant increase in investment of £20.613 million when compared to the Original Budget of £12.173 million. The increase in investment is in respect of:
- £5.121 million reprofiling from 2008/09 (as reported through Targeted Budget Management quarterly reports to Cabinet during 2008/09).
 - £3.319m additional planned works in response to current needs and priorities.
- 3.4 The proposed programme and the funding arrangements are outlined below.

	Original Budget 2009/10 £'000	Revised Budget 2009/10 £'000
<u>Capital Schemes</u>		
Investment in IT	417	700
Cash Incentive Scheme	80	0
Planned Maintenance and Improvement Programme	11,676	19,913
Total HRA Capital Programme	12,173	20,613
<u>Funded by:</u>	<i>Estimated:</i>	
Major Repairs Allowance	7,943	9,352
Housing Capital Allocation	1,230	1,230
Revenue Contribution to Capital	2,500	4,854
Capital Receipts from RTB sales	500	0
Capital Reserves – Reprofiling schemes from 2008/09	0	5,121
Capital Reserves	0	56
Total Funding	12,173	20,613

- 3.5 The programme is funded from a variety of sources including the Major Repairs Allowance (through Housing subsidy), borrowing approval (through the Housing Capital Allocation), revenue contributions, capital receipts and reserves.

- 3.6 The level of sales of council homes through 'right to buy' (RTB) has been severely affected by the current market conditions in house prices generally and the availability of mortgages in the current economic climate. The Government receive 75% of the proceeds of 'right to buy' sales and the remaining 25% is retained by the council and used to fund the capital programme. Budget Council previously agreed, in February 2008, that the first £0.500 million would be used to support major corporate projects from which Housing benefit and the remainder would be available for the Housing planned maintenance programme. The current projections assume that the original funding budget of £0.500 million of capital receipts will not be available and this will now need to be funded from reserves.

ICT

- 3.7 The ICT budget will be used for the procurement and implementation of a new Housing Management system which is fundamental to support the delivery of the Housing Management Improvement Plan. The IT budget will also provide for the implementation of the performance monitoring, and quality control needed to deliver the long term Repairs, Refurbishment and Improvement Strategic Partnership, through a new integrated performance management system. This system will be shared with the contractors and linked to the Housing and asset management systems.

CASH INCENTIVE SCHEME

- 3.8 The Cash Incentive Scheme provides a grant to help tenants buy properties in the private sector in order to free up council properties for letting. Due to the current market conditions of high property prices there was no take up of this scheme for the last two years and there is none forecast for 2009/10 so the budget is not required for this year.

PLANNED MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

- 3.9 The Planned Maintenance and Improvement Programme has been increased to £19.913 million for 2009/10 and is attached at Appendix 1. This is the last planned programme before the long term partnering agreements commence in 2010 and it focuses on optimising value for money and, prioritising Decent Homes works and tenant priorities. Therefore, works in one or more of the following categories have been included in this programme:
- essential health and safety works
 - proven demonstrable efficiencies ensuring value for money and increasing the level of decent homes
 - tenant priority
- 3.10 This has resulted in a revised 2009/10 programme, which provides £9.460 million expenditure towards Decent Homes work enabling the council to increase the level of Decent homes to 60.5% by 31 March 2010 which means approximately 7,450 homes will be decent.

Decent Homes Work	£'000	Number of Units
Communal Heating Repairs	50	14
Central Heating Distribution Systems	1,250	541
Central Heating Boilers	1,100	611
Improvement - Full Install Gas Central	398	97
Improvement - Install/Upgrade Gas Boiler	702	390
Windows replacement programme	100	40
Citywide door replacement	1,840	4,230
Kitchen replacements	1,700	430
Bathroom replacements	920	419
Electrical Surveys & Works	1,000	n/a
Minor Capital Works	175	200
Sustainable Energy Works	25	5
As part of major void works	200	20
Total	9,460	

- 3.11 The programme includes Mechanical and Electrical works of £1.350 million. Evidence from stock surveys suggests a major investment in electrical upgrading will be required in the future. As such there is a need to ensure the most effective future rewiring programmes are put in place. To meet this need £1.250 million has been allocated for specialist electrical surveys, specifying works required, putting in place a long-term future renewal programme & undertaking any urgent health and safety works arising. This survey and works project will enable a strategic rewiring works programme to be clearly set out for the stock and will specify how and where improved sustainability measures, such as smart meters, energy use displays for residents and improved lighting & controls, can be introduced when improvement works take place.
- 3.12 In addition, essential rewiring works will be carried to the Queensway blocks including improving lighting and controls at an estimated cost of £0.080 million.
- 3.13 Heating works at a cost of £3.865 million are provided through an efficient five year install and maintenance contract. The revised programme includes an additional £0.627 million investment in improving gas boilers and in total will increase decency to 180 homes. In addition it is proposed to invest £0.025 million from the energy efficiency grant funding we have received to install approximately 5 solar systems on appropriate dwellings as part of our commitment to further reducing the carbon emissions associated with the stock, and to reduce fuel poverty.
- 3.14 A contract for the essential health and safety repairs to brickwork to Somerset and Wiltshire high rise blocks has now been agreed at a cost of £1.080 million. As a result of planning granted on 3rd March 2009 works are scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2009/10, following leaseholder consultation.

- 3.15 The improvements insulation programme has been reduced to £50,000 for 2009/09, this is following a further sample property survey that has taken place during this year. From the survey and subsequent update of our APEX stock condition data now reveals that the budget of £50k for 2009/10 is sufficient to meet our property insulation requirement.
- 3.16 It is proposed to increase the Door replacement programme by a further 690 doors resulting in 4,230 replacements for 2009/10. This programme continues the 2007/08 programme for replacement doors using the LHC framework.
- 3.17 General refurbishment works also include urgent health and safety structural works that are required to Sylvan Hall and Highbrook Close. Vertical damp proof coursing (DPC's) are needed to be installed to the common way staircase windows of Sylvan Hall to prevent further water ingress and damage to internal surfaces. Depending on what is found during the exposure of brickwork further works may be required in future years to complete work on all the blocks affected. Urgent repointing work is required to the south and west elevations of Highbrook Close. The commencement of these works are estimated to cost £0.050 million each in 2009/10 and will be tendered through normal procurement channels.
- 3.18 Fire risk assessments surveys have identified work that is required to common ways. This work includes the upgrading of common way fire doors, emergency lighting and fire alarms. Risk assessments have been carried out on a number of communal water supply systems and these reports have indicated a number of items that require remedial works, this work varies from alterations to supply tanks and changes in water supply pipework.
- 3.19 Under the general refurbishment programme provision has been made for feasibility studies and for some works providing self contained bathing facilities in 3 sheltered schemes currently with shared facilities. This provision has been made as a result of the proposals put forward from the Sheltered Housing Focus Group, with a report updating the work from this group also being presented at the Housing Management Consultative meeting.
- 3.20 The revised programme proposes an increase in funding of £0.500 million for kitchen and bathroom replacements increasing the budget to £2.620 million. The works are carried out by our responsive repairs and maintenance contractors and will provide 430 new kitchens and 419 bathrooms.
- 3.21 Structural refurbishment of St James House car park is required. A structural appraisal recently carried out has indicated the need for a major structural survey and works. These works have been estimated at £0.300 million. In addition to the structural works required changes to the boiler flue emissions at St James House are also required. The works require a new flue dilution unit and will be undertaken at the same time as the structural works to the car park, the work is now estimated at £0.070 million. This is an additional £0.040 million than previously estimated to comply with the noise reduction requirements specified by the Planning Department. Further investigation and assessment is also required to ascertain whether the new flue dilution unit can be included within the car park itself.

- 3.22 The capital programme also includes £1.750 million for works to empty properties to bring these up to a standard for letting and also repairs to tenant's properties which due to their value are classified as capital rather than revenue repairs.
- 3.23 The programme continues to include an annual budget of £0.540 million for Estate Development and £0.750 million for Disabled Aids and Adaptations in line with tenants' priorities. These budgets have increased to £1.213 million and £0.850 million respectively when including the re-profiled budget carried forward from 2008/09.

CAPITAL RESERVES

- 3.24 The planned maintenance and improvement programme has been based on the need identified from the asset management system which is informed from various internal and external surveys of properties. There are occasions when elements of properties will unexpectedly fail and need emergency repair or when urgent works are identified from surveys. A contingent sum of £1.145 million is held in capital reserves to cover unforeseen failures during the financial year as detailed below. The use of these contingencies would need to be reported when required.

Contingency Held in Reserves	£'000
Lift Repairs	200
Water storage / Ventilation	100
Door Entry /Alarms	125
Asbestos Management	120
Specialist advisors	100
Launderette DDA works	200
Structural repairs	300
Total	1,145

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 All leaseholders have been or will be consulted about individual contracts carried out as part of the programme in full compliance with the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.
- 4.2 Full consultation on the detail of the individual projects will be carried out with all residents in the properties concerned, regardless of their individual tenure. Residents and Tenant Associations will be fully included in this consultation.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The main financial implications are included with the report. The South East Regional Housing Board has allocated borrowing approval of £1.230 million for 2009/10. The interest costs of this borrowing are funded by Housing Subsidy and included in the HRA Revenue Budget for 2009/10. Revenue contributions to capital schemes of £4.854 million are also included in the 2009/10 Revenue Budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman Date: 2/03/09

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Council is obliged to keep a separate Housing Revenue Account by virtue of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. In connection with human rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 there is no specific right to housing. However, in exercising its housing powers the council has to have regard to human rights, in particular the rights to respect for private life and family and to the protection of property.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 3/3/09

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 All projects carried out include full consideration of various equality issues and specifically the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Project briefs are issued on all projects and require due consideration of sustainability issues, including energy conservation and procurement of materials from managed and sustainable sources.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 All contracts are entered into with a requirement for site security. Specific projects, directly address security and prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The prime risks associated with this report are those associated with major construction projects. Full account of risk is taken through compliance, in all works, with the Construction Design & Management Regulations, which amongst other measures, require preparation of project specific Health & Safety Plans.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The Housing Capital Programme reaches to all parts of the city. It seeks to provide substantial improvement to the Council's housing stock. The implementation of the proposed programme will take account of all relevant best practice guidelines and be developed to provide ever improving performance targets.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 No alternative options were considered.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The changes to the capital budgets are necessary to set a capital programme that meets the current priorities for investment. The council's constitution and financial regulations require that amendments to capital budgets are approved through the Cabinet committee system.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Proposed HRA Capital Programme 2009/10.

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

Proposed Planned Maintenance and Improvement Programme 2009/10

Scheme	2009/10 Original Budget	Revisions to 2009/10 Budget	Reprofiling Budget from 2008/09	2009/10 Adjusted Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Mechanical & Electrical				
Electrical Surveys, Specifying, setting future renewal programme & works arising		1,250		1,250
Queensway Communal Rewiring & Lighting		80		80
Laundry Repairs	20			20
Total	20	1,330	0	1,350
Heating				
Communal Heating Repairs	50			50
Central Heating Distribution Systems	1,300		(50)	1,250
Central Heating Boilers	1,100			1,100
Improvement - Full Install Gas Central Heating	398			398
Improvement - Install/Upgrade Gas Boiler	75	627		702
Leach Court Boilers			365	365
Total	2,923	627	315	3,865
General Refurbishment				
Somerset & Wiltshire Structural Repairs		(915)	1,960	1,045
Windows replacement programme	150		(50)	100
Citywide door replacement	420	300	1,120	1,840
Improvements to Insulation	234	(184)		50
Sylvan Hall structural works		50		50
Highbrook Close structural works		50		50
Water Storage and Supply		150		150
Fire Risk Works		385		385
Sheltered Schemes – feasibility studies & alterations for self-contained bathing facilities.		298		298
Total	804	134	3,030	3,968
Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements				
Kitchen replacements	1,400	300		1,700
Bathroom replacements	720	200		920
Total	2,120	500	0	2,620
Redecorations & Repairs				
Planned Redecoration Programme	2,500		863	3,363
Total	2,500	0	863	3,363
Car Parks & Garages				
General Car Parks & Garages	40			40
St James Car Park Structural & Flue Dilation Works		340	30	370
Total	40	340	30	410

Scheme	2009/10 Original Budget	Revisions to 2009/10 Budget	Reprofiling Budget from 2008/09	2009/10 Adjusted Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Repairs & Empty Properties				
Empty Properties Major Repairs	300	200		500
Minor Capital Works	1,250			1,250
Total	1,550	200	0	1,750
Consultancy Fees				
Procurement Long Term Agreements	306			306
Cyclical redecorations	123			123
Somerset & Wiltshire		(15)	50	35
Total	429	(15)	50	464
Other Budgets				
Adaptations - Property Extension			60	60
Estate Development Budget	540		673	1,213
Disabled Aids & Adaptations	750		100	850
Total	1,290	0	833	2,123
Grand Total	11,676	3,116	5,121	19,913